THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

THE ATTITUDE OF AMERICAN CATHOLICS TOWARD ITALIAN FASCISM BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

by

Rev. William Barry Smith, B.A., M.A.

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ABBREVIATIONS

IFMD	Captured Documents of the Italian Foreign Ministry
USDJC	Records of the Criminal Division, Department of Justice, United States of America
USDJG	Records of the Department of Justice, United States of America, General Records Division, Office of Alien Property
USDS	Archives of the Department of State, United States of America

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WILLIAM B. SMITH

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation suggests a period and area of thought which has been little studied in the discipline of American Catholic history. In general there has been a tendency to overlook the post-World War I period with the exception of the involvement of Catholics in the social questions especially of the 1930's, and move immediately to the growth and activity of the Catholic Church in the United States in the early 1940's. For some, there is acknowledged a transition period, in the election of 1928, when a Catholic ran for the presidency of the United States for the first time, and lost, but this is generally thought of as being an incident which, at best, reflects the mere status of the Catholic minority.

For this reason, the methodology used for this particular study should be explained. In suggesting the topic "Attitudes of American Catholics toward Italian Fascism..." the author intended to show the growth of Catholic thought during this particular period--the time between the two world wars. This has been approached from a number of different viewpoints. First of all, and most obviously, there will be a consideration of the Catholics who wrote, either in books or periodicals, on the subject of the Fascist government in Italy. These have been examined in detail, pointing out the variations as well as the developments in thought on the subject. As will be apparent, there was a wide range, a divergence of viewpoint, tempered and influenced by various activities in Italy which touched the Roman Church and its relationship with the Italian State. It would be too simplistic to say that the fortunes of the Church in Italy were the measure of the American Catholic reaction, but it is somewhat true. For many of the authors who will be studied, it is obvious that the Fascist government was acceptable as long as it favored the Catholic Church in Italy. This, for some, was merely a negative favor--that the government was praised if only it let the Church alone, and allowed it to function without interference. For others, a more positive favor was demanded in order that support be given. Therefore, it was thought that the government of Italy should pass all necessary legislation to encourage the support and growth of Catholicism in Italy. Finally, there were some authors who would distrust the Fascist government no matter what it did in Church-State relations.

It will be noted that all available sources have been consulted to discover the written opinion of Catholics in America on the subject of Italian Fascism. Therefore, any relevant books by Catholics of the period under consideration have been consulted and the main ideas faithfully recorded.

Secondly, a great deal of attention has been given to periodical literature. While the books consulted give a general orientation of Catholic thought on the matter of Fascism, the periodical literature gives indications of the development of thought in American Catholic circles, and it also shows the immediate reaction to specific events in Italy. This literature may be classified as being of two types: those articles which are signed by particular individuals, therefore giving their personal opinions and feelings on the subject, and the editorials of the various publications, which give a more general idea of the policy and thought of the publication as a whole on this matter.

It does not, however, seem that solely in an examination of books and periodical literature, a full understanding of the subject could be uncovered. The lives, for example, of Catholics who were prominent during this period also had to be considered, as indicative of their personal attitude in this regard.

Since this dissertation concerns itself with American Catholic attitude, for the sake of completeness it has been necessary to assume that, among the most interested groups, the majority of Italian-Americans were Catholic in their religious profession. This presents a bit of a problem, because immediately the question arises as to whether and how certain people and groups of people can be judged to be Catholic. It has been assumed, therefore, that at least in name, Italian-Americans are Catholic, to some degree. This should not give the impression that this will be a study of Italian-American reaction. That would be a dissertation by itself! Therefore, the assumption just mentioned should not be taken to indicate that a full examination of Italian-American attitudes is proposed for these pages. Rather, the examination will be sufficient to indicate a trend whereby we may judge general indications of attitude.

It is important here to note the sources that have been used other than the aforementioned books and periodicals. The available files of the Department of State, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Immigration have been consulted, in order to give a picture of governmental opinion of the American Catholic situation.

Therefore, it is hoped that the reader will find in this dissertation a comprehensive study of the subject from the available materials. The subject, in years as well as ideas, is broad, but well worth the consideration.

To list all the people who in any way contributed to the final presentation of this dissertation would necessitate a catalogue as lengthy as a chapter. However, certain people are particularly noteworthy, for by their continual encouragement and assistance, they deserve specific thanks.

First of all, the author wishes to thank the Most Reverend James A. McNulty, Bishop of Buffalo, for the assignment to graduate studies which was the initial step along the way toward this finale. At the same time, thanks are due to the Very Reverend John Lambert Rowan, O.F.M., rector of St. John Vianney Seminary, East Aurora, New York, for his confidence in selecting the author to pursue graduate work in preparation for joining the seminary faculty.

The actual pursuit of graduate studies involves a number of professors whose help is continually valuable to a student. Therefore, I wish to thank sincerely the faculty of the Catholic University of America, particularly the members of the Department of History under the leadership of Dr. Manoel Cardozo. This dissertation was directed by a man whose notable scholarship inspired the author to the particular efforts necessary to produce a worthy work. Therefore, heartfelt thanks go out to the Reverend Robert F. Trisco, associate professor of church history at the University, for his many hours of assistance and encouragement. Further thanks are due to the two other readers of the dissertation, the Right Reverend Monsignor Joseph N. Moody, and Dr. Harold A. Langley. A special, sad note must be added here as well, to the memory of Dr. John T. Farrell, whose untimely death came before he could complete the task as third reader of the dissertation.

Finally, thanks are in order for the staffs of the library of the Catholic University of America and the National Archives, Washington, D.C., without whose expert guidance the labors or research would have been greatly protracted.

I feel as well, that a final, very human note should be added, as I acknowledge with deepest filial respect the love, concern and interest shown by my father and my late mother, who died a few months before this work was completed.

To one and all, I offer my continual thanks, as a pledge of which I propose remembrance in prayer and in all the work of a priest-historian is called upon to accomplish.

William Barry Smith
May 14, 1969
St. John Vianney Seminary
East Aurora, New York

CHAPTER I

DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF THE ITALIAN POLITICAL EXPERIENCE AND THE GENERAL REACTION OF AMERICANS

In order to understand what it was that Americans, and particularly American Catholics were reacting to, it is necessary first to examine the Italian phenomena which came together in such a way that Fascism was spawned and eventually became a full-grown political entity. The setting for the formation and rise of the Fascist party in Italy is found in the period immediately subsequent to the end of World War I. Political and social conditions were yet in a state of unrest, as nations sought to recover from the economic scourge of war, while at the same time they tried to rebuild what had been lost or destroyed by military action. The war had left its mark in the losses sustained by many families and to compound the social unrest of the past decade. In 1917, the Communists took over the government of Russia, and shortly thereafter, the political condition of Italy was such that groups of various interests and political philosophy were seeking a voice if not a hand in the government of that country.

Post-World War I Italy was marked by strong reaction to a war which never had been unanimously accepted, and the settlement agreed upon in the peace conference made some Italians wonder whether they had been on the winning or losing side of the struggle. The settlement effected by the Peace Treaty of Versailles gave Italy little, adding fuel to the fire of opposition to the incumbent government. Coextensive with this lack of pride in the Italian gains from the war was a lack of respect and honor for those members of the Italian army who returned from the front. In some quarters, they were blamed for the disappointing outcome of the war, even though they had been members of the victorious army. Especially noticeable was the unemployment level of these veterans of the European campaign, a cause of unrest to them, and an added source of opposition to the reigning political forces.

On the level of social interaction, post-war Italy was racked by an increase in class conflict. There was first of all the problem that the patriarchal rural society was in direct conflict with the modern industrial life of the cities. While these two groups were driven farther and farther apart, the values of the old-fashioned middle class were severely weakened in the eyes of the others classes, and within themselves, middle class people felt their grip and their values ebbing.

Another factor in the landscape of post-war Italy was the problem which would harm the nation a great deal: the economic life of the country had been so affected by the war that when the war was over Italy was faced with severe economic inflation that bore heavily on the mass of the population.

Finally, there was a vocal minority in the land which sought, as a result of the war, to rekindle the fire of national pride in Italy. These men saw victory in the war as an occasion to rebuild the forces of national patriotism, thereby making Italy a country respected by its own citizens and by the citizens of the rest of the world.[1]

In this picture of Italy in the latter part of the second decade of the twentieth century, it is obvious that there were many conflicting forces raising their voices: the social strata of patriarchal rural, modern industrial, and middle classes; those who saw the results of the war as a national disgrace and therefore saw returning soldiers as a constant reminder of infamy, as against those who sought to revive the spirit of national pride in the citizens of the land. Added to this, there was widespread unemployment and inflation. The time was ripe for social change. Communists, Socialists, and then Fascists would seek to make the change in their own way. Economic unrest was basic, not only in Italy, but in Russia and Germany as well--soon each would see the formation of a political dictatorship, which once established, would lead to economic dictatorship. Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini had a great deal in common.[2]

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[1] H. Stuart Hughes, The United States and Italy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 66.

In Italy, the governmental problem was further compounded by the fact that its structure was basically altered in the decade before the war. The narrow franchise, inherited from the Liberal Risorgimento, had been extended under Giolirri to a full electoral democracy.[3] In the same period, the Socialists were becoming stronger and antagonistic to other political philosophies, and in the aftermath of the war, the Sicilian priest, Don Luigi Sturzo, formed a political party--the Partito Popolare Italiano.

The initial steps taken to organize the Popular Party in Italy were taken in 1918, on November 18, when Don Sturzo formulated a political program which could serve as the basis of a new party, hopefully for the betterment of the political situation in Italy. His main concern was for a solution to the class struggle which was causing the most trouble for post-war Italy. The priest therefore proposed that the patriarchal estates be broken up, thereby effecting a better distribution of wealth and property among the people. Added to this, the political platform of the Partito Popolare would include a closer collaboration between interests representing labor and capital. Finally, Don Sturzo felt that Italy, if it was to take its place in the world community, had to develop a firmer, more self-sustaining foreign policy.[4]

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[2] Raymond T. Feely, Fascism-Communism-The U.S.A. (New York: The Paulist Press, 1937), p. 6.

[3] George E. G. Catlin, Preface to Action (New York: Macmillan, 1934), p. 59.

Sufficient interest was aroused by the political thought of Don Sturzo that in January of 1919, his followers had an organizational meeting. It should be noted from the first that this was not a "Catholic" party. The fact that it was headed by a priest would give that impression, but it was no more an official organ of the Roman Catholic Church than any other political party. As a matter of fact, we are told by Luigi Villari that Pope Benedict XV was somewhat adverse to the Popular party, in that he felt that some of its principles were too left-wing.[5] Still, there was some indirect support for the Popolari from the Vatican--the political activity of the priest Sturzo was not prohibited, and the ban on Catholic political activity, in affect since the seizure of Rome in 1870, had been lifted.

At any rate, the Popular Party, in that January, 1919 meeting, elaborated upon the platform which its leader, Sturzo, had initially formulated. Besides his programs to distribute the wealth and property of Italy, acceptance was given by the party congress to sweeping reforms in the Italian election laws, as well as in the realm of taxation.

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[4] Luigi Villari, The Fascist Experiment (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1926), p. 196.

[5] *Ibid.*

Combined with this, in order to make a stronger Italy in which citizens were able to take an intelligent place in the democratic form of government, the Popular Party felt there was need for a campaign against illiteracy. Finally, taking the plans of Struzo one step further, the convention wanted the foreign policy of its country to include firm support of the League of Nations.[6] The party grew, and its influence at election time increased at a rapid rate, until, on June of 1921, with the fall of the Giolitti ministry, the Partito Popolare assumed a major voice in the workings of the government.[7]

However, the ascendency of the Popular Party was short-lived, due in large measure, according to Luigi Villari, to the fact that party interest soon predominated in its members over the interests of the country.[8] Ernst Nolte, however, proposes what appears to be a more acceptable thesis--that the decline of the Popolari was not so much the fault of the internal struggle within the Sturzo group itself, but rather because the Fascists overpowered them, as well as all other political parties.[9] It should also be noted here that a possible continuation of Popular Party strength, by coalition with the Socialists, was denied by a Vatican prohibition, in 1924, against such an arrangement.

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[6] Ivone Kirkpatrick, _Mussolini: A Study in Power_ (New York: Hawthorne, 1964), p. 86.

[7] Villari, p. 198.

[8] _Ibid_.

[9] Ernst Nolte, _Three Faces of Fascism_ (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 182.

Meanwhile, in 1919, Communists and Socialists were still making their presence felt in various sections of the country, much to the dismay of at least some of the citizens. In this setting, with political unrest rampant and the governmental structure in a constantly unsettled state, there came into being small groups of politically conservative patriots, the beginnings of the Fascist party.

The derivation of the word Fascism is said to be found in the Latin "fasces," the axe surrounded by a bundle of sticks, carried by the lictors of ancient Rome as a token of the power of the state to execute criminals and flog wrong-doers. Thus dedicated to the preservation of law and order through the power of the state, small groups of young men began to band together in bodies called "fasci." The individuals who made up the "fasci" were therefore termed "Fascisti."[10] The fascisti were firmly in favor of direct action as the solution to civil and governmental unrest, a policy which was espoused in fascist context by the poet-aviator of Fiume, Gabriele d'Annunzio. To D'Annunzio is also attributed the initial use of the ancient Roman name and insignia, although the full program was later taken over by Benito Mussolini, and adopted as his own.[11]

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[10] Kenneth L. Roberts, Black Magic (Indianapolis: Bobbos-Merrill Co., 1924), p. 54.

Philosophically, it is said that Fascism received its principles from two sources: G. Sorel had developed the concept of radical revolution as a solution for the social ills of the day, and three Frenchmen, J. de Maistre, Charles Maurras, and Leon Daudet teamed with Enrico Corradini in Italy to propose doctrines based on extreme nationalism, coupled with reactionary solutions to this end. Both tendencies shared a hatred fo [illegible] d favored instead the role of a well-organ [illegible] nority.[12]

The politica [illegible] ists is well summed up in their [illegible]

> In the name [illegible] in the name of all [illegible] of the greatness of [illegible] myself wholly and f [illegible].[13]

It is evident [illegible] m was strongly nationalistic, dedict [illegible] of the government, and giving at least [illegible] the Deity. The supremacy of the state was considered primary, and in this Fascism would come to resemble closely the Communist philosophy that the individual exists solely and entirely insignia, although the full program was later taken over by Benito Mussolini, and adopted as his own.[11]

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[11] Ibid., pp. 54-55.

[12] Nicholas S. Timascheff, Three Worlds: Liberal, Communist and Fascist Society (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1946), p. 55.

[13] Roberts, p. 57.

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The political principles of the Fascists is well summed up in their oath:

> In the name of God and of Italy, and in the name of all those who fell in behalf of the greatness of Italy, I swear to devote myself wholly and forever to Italy's welfare.[13]

It is evident, therefore, that Fascism was strongly nationalistic, dedictated to the ascendency of the government, and giving at least lip-service to the Deity. The supremacy of the state was considered primary, and in this Fascism would come to resemble closely the Communist philosophy that the individual exists solely and entirely for the state, at its disposal to do its every whim. (This in distinction to democratic principles, seen best in America, that the state exists for the benefit of the individual.) It should, however, be noted that Fascism, in carrying out its policy of state supremacy, was much less efficient than Communism.[14]

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[11] Ibid., pp. 54-55.

[12] Nicholas S. Timascheff, Three Worlds: Liberal, Communist and Fascist Society (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1946), p. 55.

[13] Roberts, p. 57.

In addition, Fascism was dedicated to the preservation, by violence if necessary, of the private ownership of the means of production, and therefore to the preservation of Capitalism.[15] Both Communism and Fascism consider necessary the suppression of the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and political opinion.[16] While Communism seeks a world-wide revolution, Fascism was nationalistic to the extent that it would prefer that Italy should achieve a place of honor and leadership in the world through its own efforts. Further, Fascism rejected only the unrelegated acquisition of wealth.[17]

With regard to religion, Fascism tempered its principles of harshness to some extent, as it developed its doctrine in 1919. Since it was totalitarian in outlook, however,

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[14] Feely, pp. 9-10.

[15] John Strachey, The Menace of Fascism (New York: Covici and Friede, 1933), p. 172.

[16] Feely, p. 13.

[17] Ibid., pp. 15-19.

Fascism still claimed state supremacy, over all subordinate bodies including dominion over religion. Though professing extreme nationalism and the principles of state supremacy, the Fascists favored a national church of Italy, Roman Catholicism, under strict governmental control.[18]

The first "Fascio di combattimento" met in Milan on March 23, 1919. It was called to order by Benito Mussolini, and composed of a small number of people some of whom, like Mussolini himself, were ex-Socialists. The meeting registered the dissatisfaction held by many at the treatment accorded returning veterans of World War I. It was felt that since these men had risked their lives for the good of Italy, the country should hold them in greater esteem. Joined to this sense of grievance was the dissatisfaction of many with the peace treaty ending the war. Further, the Milan meeting took into account the fact that extremist elements of political and social thought especially the Communists and Socialists seemed to be gaining the ascendency in Italy.[19]

The Milanese "Fascisti" soon found imitators of their organization and thought in other parts of the country. Gradually, however, Mussolini was able to achieve control over these groups as well, and thereby draw together the many small organizations into one, over which he came to exercise unquestioned authority.[20] Nolte indicates the process by which the Fascists were able to achieve control. At the time of their initial meeting, the Fascists noted the Socialists were rising to the ascendency in Italy. This would be even surer, should they be able to enter into coalition with the Popolari (a coalition which never came about).[21]

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[18] _Ibid_., p. 26.

[19] Villari, pp. 33-38.

The Fascists, however, capitalized on a number of factors, and at a time when their cause seemed dubious to some, they were able to draw support from a growing number of people in the country. First of all, they appealed to the nationalistic tendencies of the Italian people, mixing them with calls for a revolution to right the social ills of the day. Further, they capitalized on the victory of D'Annunzio at Fiume, when he wrested occupation of that city from the French and English.[22] This victory brought pride to Italy, and Mussolini hastily swore allegiance to the man who had returned honor and glory to the Italian people.[23] The Fascists now had their issues, which would impress the populace. They stressed the nationalistic ramifications of the victory at Fiume, noting as well the independent nature of the activity--without the support of the government in Rome. With these issues put before the people, the Fascist cause grew and gained stature. Mussolini realized that the Socialists and Popolari were the principal parties with which he would have to deal. He decided that his best means of attack was to draw away from these group significant numbers of members, thereby making them weak to the point of extinction. He did this first by appealing to the nationalistic bourgeoisie.[24] Once this group was won to his side, Socialism and Bolshevism in Italy were mortally wounded--they had failed to win continuing support and "fascism gave the coup de grace to the revolution after its failure."[25]

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[20] _Ibid._, p. 36.

[21] Nolte, p. 182.

[22] _Ibid._, p. 185.

[23] _Ibid._, p. 188.

Once the workers had been won over, Mussolini appealed to the support of the middle class, again through the call to nationalism. He was able to form in this class squadre d'azione, forceful violent members of the middle class who were soon joined by high school and university students.[26] The steps were gradual, support was slow in coming, but eventually, Mussolini assumed control--Il Duce, and his supporters had grown in numbers to the point where they could take over the government.

Communists and Socialists were naturally opposed to the principles of the new group, which began calling itself the Fascist Party, and various attempts were made to harass the followers of Mussolini to cessation as a party. For example, an encounter in Bologna on September 20, 1920, between Fascists and the Communists and Socialists resulted in the decision that the Fascists would arm themselves for defense. This became a major factor in the political life of the area around the Po Valley.[27]

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[24] Ibid., p. 193.

[25] Ibid., p. 196.

[26] Ibid., p. 197.

In January, 1921, the Socialist Congress was held at Leghorn, and at this time there developed an ideological as well as pragmatic division between Communists and Socialists, which would, of course, strengthen the Fascist cause. The disagreement was solved when the Communists broke away from the Socialists and began on their own to institute a reign of terror and harassment as a means of swaying the population to their cause. These acts of terrorism, isolated at first, were soon met by forceful bands of armed Fascists. The terrorism on both sides went so far as to take the form of political murders, and the Fascists were not to be outdone-they added reprisal murders to their direct form of action.[28] This was part of the Fascist creed, for they felt that the state, or lacking that, individuals--concerned nationalistic citizens--had the right to assume the power to do any and all things for the good of the state, even murder, if necessary.[29] As a matter of fact, the initial tactics of the Fascists were designed to terrorize the growing number of Communists in Italy. Physical violence, such as retaliatory murders and occasional beatings were resorted to by Fascists, but much of their direct action was of a less violent nature, the infamous castor oil treatment, and the shaving of heads.[30]

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[27] Villari, pp. 38-39.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

As mentioned above, Benito Mussolini, was himself an ex-socialist, who left that party in the crisis over Italy's intervention in the war. His principal appeal was to Italian patriotism which he used to justify his activities against the rising Communist agitation. His consistent claim was that the demands of nationalism took precedence over party feelings or class interest.[31] In his attitude toward religion in general and the Roman Catholic Church in particular, Mussolini was a man of many faces. As we shall see, he introduced measures favorable to the Catholic Church in Italy, measures which would be accepted by some as a further sign that his nationalism led him to attempt to erect a State Church to further the corporate nature of his government. This might well be true, for Mussolini was a strong anticlerical while a Socialist, a tendency that seems to have been carried over into his Fascist days as well. (During the period in which he avowed Socialism, Mussolini wrote an anticlerical novel, "The Cardinal's Mistress.")[32]

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[29] Feely, p. 8.

[30] Roberts, pp. 72-74.

[31] Villari, p. 34.

As the Fascist group grew in numbers and influence, there developed a more philosophical basis for its tenets. Villari imputes to Alfredo Rocco the development of Fascist theory, based as it was on the supereminence of the State. For Rocco, and therefore for the leaders of Fascism, society is the sum-total of the individuals composing it. The state would function, therefore, primarily as an organism co-ordinating liberties granted to citizens on an individual and collective plane. For Rocco, society was regulated through an evolutionary process of government. It would begin with democratic liberalism, therein all the individuals in the society have a right to govern within the state structure. This, however, would lead to the exploitation of some members and groups by those with more influence or power, and therefore government would move on to the next stage, namely Socialism, wherein the exploited would be protected from the exploiters. Therefore, Socialism is a result of liberalism. The process, however, does not end here, for soon the protectionist element in government asserts itself more and more strongly to the extent that the individual ceases to have the importance once given to him. Rather, the state of affairs is completely reversed from the days of liberal democracy, and the individual exists solely for the good of the state--the corporate state.[33]

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[32] Hughes, p. 95.

While their political philosophy was being more carefully defined, and while small groups of Fascists were making their presence known in violent reprisals against Communist terrorism, as well as in direct, unprovoked action, the movement was not a major political force in Italy during the first few years of its existence. Kenneth L. Roberts goes so far as to state [illegible] prior to April or May, 1921, Mussolini and [illegible] been heard of in Rome, and [illegible] half of the Italian peninsula."[34] [illegible] known to some degree at least, by [illegible] Spring elections of 1921--Mussolini [illegible] Fascists were elected to the Italian [illegible]

With this [illegible] began to attract more attention, and [illegible] November 6, 1921, they held a party Congress [illegible] and it was at this time that they became a recognized national political party, the Partito Nazionale Fascists. At this congress, they formed a group of principles which would serve as a party platform:

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[33] Villari, pp. 48-52.

[34] Roberts, p. 60.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

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While their political philosophy was being more carefully defined, and while small groups of Fascists were making their presence known in violent reprisals against Communist terrorism, as well as in direct, unprovoked action, the movement was not a major political force in Italy during the first few years of its existence. Kenneth L. Roberts goes so far as to state that, " . . . prior to April or May, 1921, Mussolini and the Fascisti had scarcely been heard of in Rome, and through the entire southern half of the Italian peninsula."[34] However, they soon became known to some degree at least, by fact of the results of the Spring elections of 1921--Mussolini and thirty-one other Fascists were elected to the Italian Chamber of Deputies.[35]

With this gain, the Fascists began to attract more attention, and also more members. On November 6, 1921, they held a party Congress in Rome, and it was at this time that they became a recognized national political party, the Partito Nazionale Fascists. At this congress, they formed a group of principles which would serve as a party platform:

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[33] Villari, pp. 48-52.

[34] Roberts, p. 60.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

the exaltation of Italian prowess and victory (at the instigation of Vittorio Veneto); complete historical and geographical unity, by which Italy would be considered the bulwark of Latin civilization in the Mediterranean; the principle that the state is the legal incarnation of the nation and all for which it stands.[36]

By the following year, 1922, the Fascist Party and the Nationalist Party were practically identical in political thought, although they still remained separate party organizations. The Nationalists, Villari mentions, were more intellectual in their philosophy, but still adhered to a great number of Fascist principles. At the same time, other political groups, the Liberals, Democrats, Socialists, and Republicans, began to lose members to the newly founded political party.[37]

It soon became clear, especially as the result of the violent encounters between Communist and Fascist groups in various parts of the country, that the Fascists would only succeed if they could break the power which the Marxists had over a great number of Italian citizens. The opportunity for such a showdown came in August of 1922, when the Communists called for a general strike, which would at the same time advance the power of the party and destroy what little effectiveness was left in the Facta government. The Fascists opposed this strike to the best of their abilities, and were effective in breaking the strike, and along with it the last of the fading influence of the Communist Party in Italy.[38]

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[36] Villari, p. 43.

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

Disorders of various kinds followed as the opposing elements sought to gain influence and eventual control. The power of the Fascists was growing, and their name soon became familiar to the ears of all Italians, and with it, the program of reform, which began to appear not only acceptable, but desirable. On October 24, 1922, the Fascist Congress was held at Naples, to acquaint the South of Italy with the new movement which had begun to make such a mark on the North. We are told that 90,000 Fascists and their sympathizers met at Naples.[39] This outpouring of support for the Fascists resulted in the demand that the reins of the tottering government be turned over to the Fascists, a demand that was at first refused. Therefore, at the direction of their leader, Mussolini, small bands of Fascists began to travel toward Rome in a non-violent show of strength and solidarity of opposition to the government. On their way, they took over the government of a number of cities whose people were agreeable to their political philosophy. October 27 and 28 saw in Rome and around the Eternal City, a growing number of Blackshirts from all over the country. The government, in a final, desperate act asked King Victor Emmanuel III to sing a decree declaring martial law, as the first step toward restoring order. The king refused, and the government collapsed. On Sunday, October 29, 1922, Victor Emmanuel sent a telegram to Mussolini inviting him to present himself in Rome and form a new cabinet.[40] The group formed in 1919 to meet the Communist threat in the North and to promote nationalism throughout the country was suddenly in charge of the political fortunes of the nation, and its leader, Il Duce, presented himself to the king dressed in the black shirt, insignia of the new movement, to take the post of Prime Minister, while his followers all over Rome shouted their approval.

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[38] Roberts, p. 88.

[39] Ibid., p. 91.

The period of Fascist ascendency has been divided by Federico Chabod into two sections: the initial period, from the time of the march on Rome until January of 1925, which is considered a time of little radical change from previous governmental procedure, and the period beginning January 3, 1925, the time of the fullness of the dictatorship.

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[40] *Ibid*., pp. 95-102.

In the beginning of the Fascist regime, the basic institutions of Italian governmental life were not seriously changed, for Mussolini was willing to accept the monarchy and indicated his allegiance to the House of Savoy, in the person of Victor Emmanuel III. At the same time, much of the political structure within the country remained the same in the sense that existing political parties, or at least the rank and file membership, were accepted by Mussolini, and their leaders made a part of his government. Thus, he accepted the collaboration in his cabinet of members of the Liberal and Popular parties. However, it should be noted that Mussolini accepted these men primarily as individuals, not as party members. If they began to act as members of their own party, Il Duce was quick to turn them out of office. Actually, their participation in government was, as a matter of fact, shortlived: the Popolari were members of the cabinet until April, 1923, and the Liberals remained a bit longer, until the end of 1924.[41]

Soon after he had received a vote of confidence from the Chamber of Deputies, in the initial days of his regime, Mussolini began to lay plans for the future dictatorship. By November of 1923, he had formulated a change in the electoral laws of the land, whereby the party polling the most votes in an election would thereby be granted two-thirds of the seats in the Chamber. In this way, he hoped that a mere simple majority of popular support would yield him enough members in the Chamber to pass anything in the way of legislation he might desire. The law was passed on the eighteenth of November, and its purpose was soon fulfilled. On April 6, 1924, a new election was held, in which the Fascists polled 64.9% of the votes, and thereby received 374 seats in the Chamber; Mussolini's rule was further strengthened.[42]

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[41] Federico Chabod, A History of Italian Fascism (London: Weidenfied and Nicholson, 1961), p. 62.

There still remained opposition to the Fascists in the Chamber of Deputies, and the vocal leader of this opposition was Giacomo Matteotti, who made frequent and violent speeches against the new regime. On June 10, 1924, Matteotti disappeared, and although an investigation was instituted at the direction of the government, it was not until August 17 that the disappearance was solved. At that time, the body of the Deputy was discovered, with ample evidence that his death was a case of murder. Because of the political persuasion of the victim, there arose a strong anti-Mussolini cry among a number of people who felt that Matteotti's opposition had been silenced by the government. The cry did not cease even when a few suspects were captured, tried and some convicted for the crime. Opposition leaders still felt that Il Duce was behind the foul play.[43] The most vocal of the accusers, those who made the most protest over the Matteotti affair, were about 150 members of the Chamber of Deputies: Socialist, Republican, Liberal, and Popolare in party affiliation. They withdrew from the Chamber in protest, and called themselves the Aventine opposition.[44] Their main contention was that the Fascists had promised a return to law and order for Italy, and examples such as the murder of Matteotti were sufficient to bear out the contention that the Fascist government had failed. They suggested that either law and order prevail or the Fascist government should fall, since it was really a question of morality in government with which they were concerned. Their opposition continued to the point that they demanded of the king that he dissolve the cabinet, but when he refused, the Aventines were left with little to do but dissolve as a faction and return to the Chamber.[45] The incident was important, however, because its influence was beyond one man--it involved the credibility and trust given to the government, the possibility of opposition, and the extent to which the government would go to gain its ends. Mussolini seemed to prove that guilty or not, he could withstand charges against his government, and also that opposition, even of an organized, vocal and significant number would not be able to overthrow his regime. He felt safe now to proceed to the next step.

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[42] Ibid., p. 63.

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[43] Villari, p. 66.

[44] Hughes, pp. 99-100.

[45] Chabod, p. 64.

On January 3, 1925, Mussolini addressed the Chamber of Deputies: " . . . I and I alone assume the political, moral, and historical responsibility for everything that has happened."[46] In doing this, Mussolini announced the arrival of full dictatorship to Italy. All power was now reserved to him and his party. No longer would there be collaboration with other parties in the cabinet. With this as a background, Mussolini was able to tighten the control still farther by the end of that same year. On December 24, he had a law passed which initiated the decline of the Chamber. From that time, the head of the government was responsible to the king alone. Further, ministers of the government were appointed or dismissed by the king solely on the recommendation of the head of government.[47] By 1928, the control of officeholders had made a complete turn: Parliament was no longer to have even a consultative voice in these appointments. Rather, the names of officials in the government were to be proposed by the Fascist Grand Council. The Party had replaced the Parliament.[48]

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[46] Ibid., p. 65.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., p. 66.

Even with the influence of the Chamber of Deputies so completely crippled, Il Duce was not satisfied. He desired to restructure the Chamber so that it would become completely favorable to the plans of the party. Therefore, in 1928, another election reform bill was passed by the Fascist majority, whereby a single list of candidates would be proposed to the electorate. This list was compiled after the recommendations of leaders of the trade unions and other organizations had been gathered. These groups would present 800 names to the Fascist Grand Council, who would in turn choose 400 names that would appear on the ballot for approval, but not choice, of the voters. The dictatorship had made the final act whereby it was not only established, but assured of continuance.[49] After 1929, and the elections of that year, there was no longer a place in the Chamber for voices of opposition to the Fascist regime.

It should not be thought, however, that Il Duce lacked popular support for his measures. The people of Italy, for the most part, seem to have gone along with the regime. This was due to a number of factors. Mussolini knew how, by word and deed, to gain popular support. His speeches were the kind of nationalistic doctrine which pleases the public. To ensure its support, Mussolini, early in his rule, established the "Voluntary Militia for National Safety," thus enlisting the Blackshirts who were to be a para-military organization for the protection of government interest. This militia could use terrorist tactics, and some anti-Fascists were well aware of this after campaigns of murder and other violence. Other opponents were merely forced into exile, and such names as Salvemini, Nitti, Sturzo, and Sforza were part of a growing list of expatriates scattered throughout the world. For the most part, however, people just got used to the new government and learned to live with it. The improvements which were made in conditions throughout the land were consoling to a people so long involved in near anarchy.[50]

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[49] _Ibid._, p. 63.

Mussolini was further able to use events of the day for the advantage of the dictatorship. From November 4, 1925, until October 31, 1926, no less than four attempts were made on the life of the Prime Minister. With this as an excuse, Mussolini was able to exact certain "public safety" laws, whereby certain secret societies, notably the Freemasons, were dissolved, the Socialist party was abolished, all anti-nationalist newspapers were suppressed or severely restricted, and anti-Fascists could be punished in law as enemies of the state.[51]

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[50] Ibid., pp. 67-69.

[51] Herbert L. Matthews, The Fruits of Fascism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1943), p. 161.

Basic to this whole plan of reorganization of the Italian nation was Mussolini's concept of the Corporate STate. The Fascist philosophy in this matter was clearly developed, and in practice it was highly successful. Each individual was considered bound to contribute to the welfare of the nation according to his talents and opportunities. At the same time, all private property was considered a trust held by the individual for the common good. With this caveat, large numbers of individual freedoms were granted to the populace, in order to encourage personal initiative, especially in the development of personal property. In this system then, the state coordinates rather than controls individual action.[52]

In practice, the already existing Fascist syndicates of various workers and employers gradually gained control of power by incorporating their fellow-workers into the syndicates and indoctrinating them in the principles of corporatism. Soon, all the categories of industry, agriculture and the professions were organized within the context of Fascist syndicates. The next step was made by the government. On April 3, 1926, the syndicates were incorporated in law thereby regulating their activities in line with the total aims of the nation. This law as well put an end to strikes and lockouts, and by equal treatment of labor and management sought an end to class struggle.[53]

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[52] Harold E. Goad and Muriel Currey, The Working of a Corporate State (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, Ltd., 1933), pp. 13-14.

Now that the economic activities of the nation were regulated under the supervision of the state, it was felt that there should be, in writing, a document listing the aims of labor in such a society. Therefore, on April 21, 1927, the Labor Charter was approved, putting the activities of government and the syndicates in a Fascist context. Work was described in the Charter as a social duty, primarily because the interest of the nation called for the subordination of individual or personal interest. Therefore, production was to be accomplished for the well being of the individual citizen, but only in his role as a member of the nation--production, then, had its ultimate goal in the development of national power.[54]

It was further decreed that all activities or connections that existed with or between employer and employee were subject to the regulation of the state. Likewise, were all relations between management, labor and the state to be regulated. The syndicates were given more power by recognizing them and them alone as representative of the various catagories of labor and management. In other words, the agricultural syndicate spoke for all farmers, whether or not they belonged to the syndicate.[55]

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[53] Matthews, p. 165

[54] Chabod, pp. 71-73.

The final step of corporatism involved the organization of the many syndicates into a national confederation. Twenty-two corporations of syndicates were established, according to a grouping of twenty-two more or less inclusive categories. These became the elements of the Corporate State, and the confederation was to act as liaison between the state, and labor and employer. Thus, the government could easily regulate the various activities of economic life and the Fascist Party increased its control since the heads of the various syndicates and therefore the representatives of the national confederation, were party members. Jobs were distributed through syndicates, and the men in charge of distributing this patronage were likewise members of the Fascist Party. Therefore, it was difficult if not impossible to get a job unless the applicant be a member of the party.[56]

Through this means, the Corporations could not only regulate wages, profits and prices within the Corporate State, and under the direction of the government, but they would gradually achieve such importance that they would be able to influence the political order as well. By 1939, the Corporations had replaced what little was left of political representation. At that time, the Chamber of Deputies was abolished and a new chamber established--the Chamber of Fasces and Corporations, containing the leading members of the Corporate Confederation. This new chamber, plus the senate (still appointed by the king), would act almost solely in a consultative capability, as they assisted the Fascist regime in making laws.[57]

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[55] Matthews, p. 166.

[56] Ibid., p. 167.

Another consideration that should be noted at this time was the Fascist attitude toward religion. This became evident almost immediately after the arrival of the new regime. The Fascist government set about encouraging Catholic support, especially through laws passed which were directly favorable to that religion. Possibly the most meaningful action performed in the early days of the Mussolini ministry, an action which would be recalled for many years after, was the law restoring the crucifix to the classrooms of the nation's schools. It was a symbolic gesture, but its symbolism was appreciated by all who had lived under the effects of the Law of Guarantees of 1871. At the same time, Mussolini's government approved of religious instruction in the classrooms, carried out by the clergy. Further, the clergy, whose salaries were subsidized by the government, were to receive an increase in their stipend. Religious communities were also recognized by the Fascist regime, in that legal status was accorded convents and monasteries. As a final nod to the status of ecclesiastical persons of the land, a law gave to students for the priesthood a deferment from military service.

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[57] Chabod, p. 73.

Two other important concessions were made to the Church in Italy by the Fascists. No longer would there be government interference in the appointment of members of the hierarchy in Italy, which previously had taken the form of the submission of names proposed for bishoprics to the authorities of the government for their "placet." Along with this change, the government waved the right they had previously claimed to examine official documents from the Holy See which were to be circulated in the country. Also, as we have mentioned above, the Fascist government, in this case more for self-protection than out of love for the Holy see, would outlaw secret societies, particularly the Freemasons.[58]

In the first year after he took office, Mussolini also decreed equal treatment for public and private, primarily Catholic schools. He gave official governmental recognition to the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan. He began a program of official participation by the government in major religious ceremonies. He also passed other laws which would at least indirectly benefit the Church, in the sense that they echoed Church teaching. Thus, for example, a law against public blasphemy was passed, divorce laws were made more stringent, and birth control was opposed by the Prime Minister himself.[59]

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[58] *Ibid.*, pp. 202-203.

All of this was no doubt a bit baffling to those who remembered Il Duce in his Socialist, anticlerical days. Even after his break with the Socialists and the formation of his own party, Mussolini did not betray any sympathy with the Catholic Church. On January 1, 1920, for example, he addressed his Milanese followers on the "rival papacies of Moscow and Rome" of which, he said, the Fascists were the "heretics of both religions."[60]

While all of this was taking place, the Church was naturally quite vitally interested. However, John Carter in his dissertation comes to the conclusion that " . . . the Church's position was no more one of outright hostility than it was of unqualified approval."[61] It would seem that the Holy See was playing a game of "wait and see," especially since the Pope was still the self-imposed prisoner of the Vatican. The Fascist leaders did not bring with them the best of Catholic credentials, and the means by which they came to power, while unbloody, was still suspect to some. Nevertheless, the churchmen of Italy could not be unaware and unimpressed with the legal grants which gave the Church such a favored position under the new regime.

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[59] Kirkpatrick, p. 259.

[60] Ibid., p. 184.

[61] John B. Carter, American Reactions to Italian Fascism, 1919-1933 (New York: Columbia University, 1954), p. 206. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation.)

There was of course, other noteworthy evidence of interplay between Church and State in Italy, as well as other important actions by the government, notably the Lateran Treaties of 1929, the Catholic Action controversy of 1931, and the Italo-Ethiopian War which began in 1935. However, they are of such a nature that in themselves and in the reaction to them, much more is involved than a mere mention. Therefore, separate chapters will later consider these areas of interest. For the present, it is enough to note the appearance of Fascism in Italy and the political scene of the world. Coupled with this, is an understanding of the idea of the Corporate State, and the initial actions of the Italian government toward this end. This will provide sufficient material for reaction. What has been sought in this initial section is a brief treatment of the principles and main points of Fascist theory, along with a chronology of the important events of the formative years, and the political experience of the first seven years of Fascist government in Italy.

Having seen, then, in summary form, the appearance of Fascism on the Italian scene, and having described its rise to power, its initial actions, and some of the more important trends which developed within it, we can well suppose that post-World War I America would have been interested in what was taking place on the Italian peninsula. We will proceed, therefore, with a consideration of American reaction to the Italian Fascist experience. Although the main purpose of this dissertation is to examine the American Catholic reactions to Italian Fascism, for two reasons it will be important to look at the American reaction in general.

First of all, American Catholics did not live in a vacuum. It is true that there was, at this period of time, a great deal of the "siege" mentality, whereby Catholics in America tended to stay and think together. This was due to real and imagined persecution in various forms. However, they were certainly influenced by the political attitudes of their fellow Americans. Therefore, to see the reaction in America purely in the Catholic context would give an untrue picture of the situation as it actually existed. American pro- and anti-Fascists were found in all religious groups, and the reasons for the position taken were often common to all. Also, it must be remembered that because of the religious complexion of Italy, Catholicism was dominant and a great deal of important Fascist activity was in the realm of Church-State policy. Therefore, American non-Catholics would often react to Italian Fascism because of the nature of Catholic benefits derived from the Mussolini government, while American Catholics might certainly have their opinions colored by the benefits their Church was deriving from the new regime.

The other reason for studying reaction in America on a more than strictly Catholic level might well be considered as due to a need to cover all possibilities. American Catholic reasons and reactions in periodicals and newspapers can easily be found and understood. However, there were a number of pro- and anti-Fascist groups in the United States. To these groups belonged a number of Italian-Americans and immigrants from Italy. It is impossible to discover the religious position of the individuals belonging to the groups, but we can assume that since Italians were, for the most part, Catholics, Italian-Americans would likewise, for the most part, be Catholics. Therefore, in order to get a complete picture of the total American Catholic reaction, it is necessary to spend a bit of time in consideration of the pro- and anti-Fascist groups in the United States, with an understanding that they provide both an insight into American reaction and an indication of American Catholic reaction.

In this light, an article written in 1939 might shed some light on the question of religious involvement of Italians coming to America. The author has stated that

Italians coming to America were losing their Catholic faith in large numbers. He said that, because of the secular education offered in this country, the faith of many was severely weakened and many Catholics soon began to adopt the secular attitude of those around them. With regard to Italian-Americans, he called this a disservice to themselves, because perseverance in the faith would aid Italians in America to achieve a desirable and useful place in society. He suggested that part of the cause of defections from Catholicism among Italians in America was to be found in the neglect by the clergy of the Italian immigrant, and therefore, he suggested that more canonical parishes be established, to replace the national parishes already in existence. In this way, he felt that Italians would be more easily assimilated into American life.[62]

Therefore, the problem was compounded. To speak of Catholic reaction, we have to set up some criteria, and yet there is doubt as to what qualifies one as a Catholic--Baptism, regular attendance, involvement in Catholic activities--all or some of these are possible indications. The best we can say, in this study, is that we suppose Catholicity to one degree or another of a great number of Italians in America--whether that Catholicity be active or dormant. With this in mind, we can study a number of American reactions, seeing them in the light of at least some Catholic activity.

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[62] John V. Tolino, "The Church in America and the Italian Problem," The Ecclesiastical Review, C (January, 1939), pp. 22-32.

It should first be noted that there was no international capital of Fascism in the sense of a Communist center of activity. Also, unlike the Communist party, Fascist and pro-Fascist groups outside of Italy were not to be considered an automatic extension of the government and to strive for a recognition, wherever they were, of Italian advances and accomplishments.[63] In other words, as will be seen, Communist international organizations were formed to subvert and possibly overthrow the government of the country in which they lived, while Fascists were to act more as lobbyists for the Italian cause, while supporting the government of the host country at the same time.

The March on Rome occurred in October of 1922; by March of the following year, American newspapers noted that Fascist organizations were beginning to appear in this country, particularly in Detroit, Western Pennsylvania, Cleveland, Youngstown, and San Francisco.[64] In May of 1924, Henry P. Fletcher, American ambassador to Rome, reported to the Department of State an interview he had with Guido Sollazzo, the Vice-Secretary General of Italian Fasci in

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[63] Feely, p. 14.

[64] Carter, p. 43.

Foreign Countries. In the interview, Sollazzo explained the purpose of Fascist groups outside Italy. He noted that they were organized under the direction of the central committee, of which he was Vice-Secretary. The groups were to be composed of both immigrants and naturalized citizens. Their purpose was to support the government of the country in which they existed, not to oppose it, and while doing this, they were to act in whatever way necessary to improve the relationship between the country in which they found themselves and Italy. They were considered to be on a spiritual and cultural mission.[65]

A year later, the American embassy had another visit from Italian officials in which the same subject was discussed. Richard W. Child reported to the Department of State that Dr. Mattioli of the Chamber of Deputies, together with some other Fascists, had an interview with him in which they expressed the desire of coming to America to organize the Italian-Americans here into Fascist groups. They felt that since there had been a great number of Italian immigrants since 1920, it was possible for them to be made a unified political factor in the United States, in best interests of both Italy and America.[66] Just a few months previous to this visit, a pro-Fascist group in New Jersey had incorporated itself under the laws of that state, as the Central Council of Fascisti of New Jersey, January 25, 1924. In the certificate, they stated that they were establishing a central council, and that other lodges might be formed and joined to them. They stressed their adherence to the Constitution of the United States, and stated that their purposes were in keeping with it--to help aliens to become citizens and learn more about America, to promote economic, moral, intellectual, and political life among their members, to protect new immigrants, and to encourage good will between employers and labor.[67]

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[65] USDS, Fletcher to State, Rome, May 9, 1924 (811.00F/12). (Dispatch)

[66] USDS, Child to State, Rome, May 15, 1925 (811.00F/1). (Dispatch)

One of the organizations which was transplanted from Italy to America was the Italian War Veterans. Founded in 1914 in Italy as the Associazione Nazionale Combattenti, it was approximately equivalent to the American Legion. In 1922, Italian immigrants organized a branch of the group in the United States for Italian veterans. With the advent of the Fascist era, the Italian War Veterans became an official agency in America of the Italian government, in which capacity they registered on June 23, 1923. There were, however, other such groups of Italian war veterans in the

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[67] USDS, Certificate of Incorporation, January 25, 1924 (811.00F/12).

United States, until 1929, when, on orders from the Italian government, they were all combined into the Federation of Italian War Veterans, incorporated under the laws of the State of New York on July 17, 1929. Affiliated to this organization was a benevolent group, the Vittorio Emmanuele III War Veterans Foundation, which was incorporated on December 31, 1925, to serve the needy members of the Federation.

The Federation had many goals, including the establishment of social centers and the providing of medical needs for its members. It also took the lead in American celebration of Fascist feasts. Further, pension plans were provided for members, and an honor system was established for individual recognition within the group. The Federation had attached to it a ladies' auxiliary--the Italian Legion Auxiliary. Over and above the benefits provided for members on a social and economic level, the Italian War Veterans Federation set about to recruit members for the Fascist party. They were militantly nationalistic, regarding themselves as agents of the Italian government, and in this capacity, supported the Italian cause in the Ethiopian War and World War II. Their end in America came in July of 1942, when their offices and records were taken over by agents of the Department of the Treasury.[68]

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[68] USDJG, "Italian War Veterans" (Job #450-28). (Departmental Study)

Another United States group was the Dante Alighieri Society of New York, which also had its origins in Italy. It was founded there in the 1890's as the Societa Nazionale Dante Alighieri, and its original purposes were the advertising of the cultural achievements of Italy, particularly the eminence it had during the Renaissance. Italian immigrants brought the society to America, and it was soon well established here shortly after its organization in Italy. The main arm in America was in New York. In the United States, the Dante Alighieri Society established a workshop and library of Italian culture. They encouraged the study of the Italian language in American schools and encouraged tourist trade with Italy, especially the tours in Italy of American students. However, during the Fascist era, the society became an organ for government propaganda. Their library began to be stocked with books on the history and culture of Italy from a Fascist point of view. After Pearl Harbor, this society was also dissolved and its records, library, and offices were seized by agents of the United States government.[69]

Fascism, then, was present on the American scene and found a good number of supporters in the United States, especially among those with Italian background. However, it should not be supposed that even the initial Fascist period in Italy was supported unanimously in America. Henry P. Fletcher was forced to write to the Department of State in June, 1926, conveying a message from Mussolini. The Premier was very upset by the fact that anti-Fascist Americans in port cities were using terrorist tactics against the crews of some Italian ships in port. He asked protection by the American government for his seamen.[70] That same year, the Italian Embassy in Washington wrote to Mussolini on the state of Fascist activity in America. The New Jersey group was mentioned, and a copy of its constitution sent to the central committee, to which it was directly connected. However, it was noted that, for the most part, the American people and government were hostile to Fascist activity in their country. The report went on to say that many in America considered that in this matter, the Italian government was acting in bad faith, and that in fact what they were doing was organizing an opposition political group, which, because its political philosophy was contrary to American principles, was interfering in America with American sovereignity.[71]

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[69] USDJG, "Dante Alighieri Society" (Job #450-27). (Departmental Study)

On the West Coast, an anti-Fascist group was organized, called the American Friends of Italian Freedom. They do not seem to have been very vocal, but on at least one occasion claimed the attention of the United States government. In 1929, the Friends scheduled a lecture in Los Angeles by Professor Gaetano Salvemini, the exiled anti-Fascist historian. The Italian Vice-Counsul in Los Angeles was instrumental in preventing the public address by Salvemini, and the American Friends of Italian Freedom, who would have benefited greatly by such a noteworthy lecturer, protested this action directly to the Department of State in Washington.[72]

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[70] USDS, Fletcher to State, Rome, June 2, 1926 (811.00F/18). (Dispatch)

[71] IFMD, Italian Embassy to Mussolini, Washington, November 26, 1926 (Microfilm-T 586, Roll 429). (Dispatch)

In the early years of the Roosevelt presidency, it was suggested by some that Fascism might come to this country, not so much through American agents of the Italian government, but through the election to office of men whose political principles were such that their policies would, in practice, carefully echo Fascist policy. Representative of such a feeling was John Strachey, who wrote in 1933 that the Roosevelt administration was possibly an American equivalent of Fascism. He noted the exigencies of capital which were driving the party in power to government control, direction, and incorporation. Thus capitalism was in fact favored by the government, which was unwilling to attack its excesses. The author did admit, however, that the administration was too recently inaugurated to come to a definite conclusion.[73] Others, however, would defend the incumbent government from such charges. Such a supporter was George Norlin, who wrote in 1934 that the difference between Rooseveltism and the totalitarian governments of the world was to be found particularly in the attitude toward freedom. For Norlin, freedom entailed "Sacrifice for the good of a common discipline," by which the "larger purposes will bind us all."[74] Therefore, while some would indicate support of a theory that Fascism was coming to the United States from within, the view did not win the credence of a majority of the country.

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[72] USDS, American Friends of Italian Freedom to State, May 3, 1929 (811.00F/57). (Letter)

Most difficulties were seen as coming from outside the country, and through them leading to the formation of a "Fifth Column" in America. This was the fear which would oppose the militant nationalistic Italian groups of whatever sort. It would likewise react strongly against the formation of Communist groups in America. Further, it would oppose supporters of the Franco government in Spain as likewise bringing an anti-American element into the country.

For many Americans, Fascism was just that, and its appearance in different countries did not lead to any distinction among Americans--Fascism was Fascism, whether found in the Spanish, German, or Italian experience. Seeming to support this judgment, Mussolini wrote in 1942: "The great unity of the Axis includes Nazis, Fascists and Spanish Falangistas. There is no longer any distinction between Nazism and Falangismo."[75]

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[73] Strachey, p. 148.

[74] George Norlin, Fascism and Citizenship (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1934), p. 41.

To some Americans, this statement was verified years before. Spanish Falangistas were as much the precursors of Fascism as were members of the Italian War Veterans Federation, and for this reason, all were grouped into one by a great number of American observers. Allan Chase wrote in 1943 that for a number of years, the Falange had been infiltrating the United States with pro-Fascist propaganda. For him, a Falange member was a pro-Fascist, and the connection between Spain and Italy (and Germany) was close enough that all were gaining by the members' activities here. He accused members of the Falange of being able to hide under the protection of diplomatic immunity, because most of them were attached to consulate and embassies in this country.[76]

This same author mentions two incidents wherein Fascism, particularly of the Italian variety, was aided or at least given encouragement. In 1938, a Falange front group called the Casa de Espania sponsored a lecture by Magistrate Sylvester Sabbatino, a pro-Fascist who attacked the American policy of persecuting Spanish Fascists. This lecture was held in New York, at the "school of the Franciscan FAthers," on West 16th Street. The Falange agents supported a strong stand against Communism, and when they imported the Marquesa de Chienfuegos, who asserted persecution by the Spanish Republic, she was especially hailed by CAtholics. Fulton Sheen, for example, was quoted as calling her "one of the living martyrs of history," while the CAtholic Digest referred to the Marquesa as " . . . the world's greatest woman orator against communism."[77] Chase also claimed that the Falanage worked surreptitiously in favor of the Fascist cause, and said that Falange agents, " . . . mingle regularly with Italian longshoremen in Brooklyn and with known members of the Christian Front on the New York waterfront."[78]

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[75] Allan Chase, _Falange: The Axis Secret Army in the Americas_ (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1943), p. 41.

[76] _Ibid._, p. 238.

Harold Levine, however, felt that the Fifth Column scares which were rampant in the United States in reaction to supposed Fascist activity seemed really baseless. He claimed that because of such writers as Leland Stowe, who ascribed the Fall of Norway and France to Fifth Column activity, there developed a scare-hysteria, and the formation of various patriotic protective groups.[79] As a matter of fact, Levine even doubted the veracity of Stowes' story, saying it " . . . contained no more than an iota of truth, if that."[80] He demanded of those who accused so many in America of treason that they substantiate their charges with evidence of overt acts. He further accused those who looked for a Fascist behind every tree of being hypocritical and frustrated and of exploiting despair. He contended they were the real Fifth Column in America, while the ones whom they accused were doing nothing more than exercising their American rights to free speech in order to effect changes in government.[81]

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[77] Ibid., pp. 217-18.

[78] Ibid., p. 237.

[79] Harold Levine, Fifth Column in America (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1940), pp. 3-4.

It would seem to be fair to agree with Cordell Hull, as quoted by Villari, who said that the American people have always been friendly to Italy, in spite of their hostility to Fascism.[82] This would explain some American support for Italian activities here and abroad and as well would indicate the line which could be drawn by many American observers. Villari says that we must also remember the image of Fascism that was presented to the public in America by the American press, if we are to understand the American reaction. He claims an incident in which an American Jew returned to the United States after a visit to Italy. This man wrote an article telling how well the Jews were treated there by the Fascist government, " . . . but no American paper would publish it because anything favorable to Fascist Italy was taboo in the eyes of the powerful Jewish advertisers."[83]

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[80] Ibid., p. 9.

[81] Ibid., p. 9-12.

[82] Villari, Italian Foreign Policy Under Mussolini (New York: The Devin Adair Co., 1956), p. 288.

In concluding this section, it can be said that reaction among Americans in general was varied, and for varied reasons. On the plane of activity, it was generally minimal, except in the case of some Italian-Americans. It might be well to summarize general reactions to Fascism by specific groups, as seen by Carter. He wrote that the American Masonic Lodges were naturally opposed to the Fascist government in Italy, and that this opposition grew the more Mussolini opposed the Freemasons. They felt that the Catholic Church in Italy had joined forces with the government to blot out all vestiges of thelodges there. The American Legion was more favorably impressed by the new Italian government early in its regime, although this favoritism gradually wore off as the Fascists became more militaristic. In the beginning, however, the Legion did not mind the comparisons made between itself and the Fascists in the realm of strong nationalism and defense of returning war veterans. In fact, when the Legion held its national convention in San Francisco in 1923, Mussolini was invited to speak to the group, an invitation which Il Duce refused. Finally, Carter's study led him to the conclusion that the Ku Klux Klan in America, which resented deeply the comparison of Fascist terrorist bands with its own group, also opposed the Fascists because they were foreigners and predominantly CAtholic. However, the Klan admired the extreme nationalism of the Fascisti.[84]

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[83] Ibid., p. 200.

The press in America demands a bit more attention with regard to its attitude toward the Fascist government in Italy. Carter mentions that the secular press was rather uninformed about the trend of Italian politics in 1922:

> Until his [Victor Emmanuel III] final action in summoning Mussolini for form a new ministry, news stories published in this country generally accepted the idea that a new ministry would be attempted by one of the previous premiers . . .[85]

The early reaction to the Fascist experience has been described as having three different facets: either Fascism in the early twenties was considered just another spectacular display of Italian temperament, and therefore to be viewed with contempt, or it was considered a case of anti-Communish victory, or it was accepted with a feeling of antipathy toward the rise of Fascism, which would serve to warn the United States that such party organizations were dangerous and should not be allowed to exist here.[86]

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[84] Carter, pp. 241-48.

[85] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

Those of the first opinion had little sympathy for the Italian government because of the feeling that Italians were so unpredictable, and revolutions were so regularly staged that they could be viewed almost as trivial occurrences. These people felt that Italians were the type who historically had easily followed almost any type of leader so long as he was strong. Finally, they felt that the Italian nation was noted for its secret organizations, and therefore stooped to ridicule and sarcasm, comparing Fascists to the Ku Klux Klan, or to a group of young rowdies.[87]

The second category included those who were in sympathy with the Fascist victory. For these, the main cause for joy was the defeat of Communism, which they saw as an imminent danger to the Italian nation. Further, it seemed that Fascism brought about a reanimation of Italy, along with its unification, politically. Mussolini was thought of as worthy of support for giving needed strong leadership and direct, energetic diplomacy.[88]

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[86] Sister Mary Arnold Benedetto, American Opinion of the Rise of Fascism, 1921-1922 (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1951), p. 4. (Unpublished Master of Arts Dissertation).

[87] Ibid., pp. 5-16.

[88] Ibid., pp. 17-29.

Finally, there were those in America who viewed the Fascists with apprehension. They disliked the direct action and extra-legal tactics that had been employed, especially the use of terrorism and violence. In this, Fascists were compared to Bolsheviks as far as tactics were converned. They criticized the Fascists for having ignored or restricted liberties of groups and individuals, citing the censorship of the press and restrictions on foreign pressmen, as well as the lack of freedom of choice due to the new election laws and laws against propaganda. To those directly opposed to Fascism, the new regime in Italy was an oligarchical dictatorship, and its extreme nationalism was bringing about the distinct possibility of war.[89]

A recent article in the American Historical Review by Alan Cassels has highlighted a function that the press in America played in regard to FAscist influence within the United States. Cassels notes the appearance of various Fascist and pro-Fascist groups early in the Mussolini era. In those early days, the policy of the Italian ambassador, Gelasio Caetani, echoling that of his government, was that the groups should work quietly, not causing any concern within a country which was hospitable to them. As time went on, however, they seemed to become more and more of a propaganda weapon. Cassels notes that after 1925, there was more of an appearance of Fascist ideas being spread in America. The government, however, did not take this phenomenon too seriously--the groups were warned, but officials in Washington felt that there could be little harm done by these organizations. In 1929, however, Cassels notes an article which appeared in Harpers Magazine, from the pen of Marcus Duffield. This article pointed out the dangers of Fascist groups in America and the value they might have in the future for the Italian government. It put them in the spotlight, thereby dealing a serious blow to propaganda, since thereafter they were more carefully observed by the American government, and the Italian diplomats immediately counselled a return to more unobtrusive activity.[90]

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[89] Ibid., pp. 30-41.

The Duffield article charged that Mussolini considered Italian-Americans as his subjects. Through the medium of Fascist groups in America, he was able to set up a political organization within the American state, complete with its own secret courts, schools, and taxes. The claim was that Mussolini had set up a Fascist League of North America which took orders directly from Italy. This league would provide an arm of propaganda for the Fascists, and also serve to solicit men and money for any

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[90] Alan Cassels, "Fascism for Export: Italy and the United States in the Twenties," American HISTORICAL Review, LXIX (April, 1964), 707-712.

Italian military effort. The League was to give the appearance of anti-Communism as a cover for its nationalistic activities.

These groups were taught that Italians coming to America should maintain their national identity, and they considered anyone who became an American citizen a traitor. Because of this, their influence was great enough to maintain Fascist control over almost all of the Italian-language newspapers in the United States. Also, Duffield claimed that seventy per cent of the Italians in the United States were at least sympathetic to the Fascist regime in Italy. It was charged that the American fascios set up military-like tribunals, in which they would try their own for what they considered traitorous activity. The League was also careful to enlist support especially from Italian merchants, who would suffer from boycott should they not conform.

Mussolini found various methods, according to Duffield, for exacting money from Italo-Americans, the most successful being the harassment of relatives in Italy should the American branch of the family not send the desired money to the government. Finally, it was charged that if Italians who had emigrated from their native land should return for a visit, they were very often kept there in Italy and conscripted into military service. Duffield ends his article by asking: "Why doesn't our government act to protect its own citizens and residents?"[91] As has been seen, the article itself was sufficient to bring about action by the government, and to put to flight some of the Fascist groups in the United States. This is a good example of the press influencing the American response to a foreign phenomenon within its midst.

Before concluding this section on American reactions in general, it would be well to summarize briefly the American Protestant attitudes toward Fascism, as from Carter's study. He claims that Protestants generally tempered their opinions in the light of the fortunes of Catholics in Italy. The American Protestants resented what they considered to be a trend among Catholics to seek a favored position in Italy. Therefore, they would oppose those grants to the Church made by Mussolini, and transfer their opposition to the government which made the grants. They were thankful for the religious liberty granted by the Italian Constitution and later by the Lateran Pacts. Further, they felt that the Fascist means were reprehensible no matter what noble ends they may have had. Still, over and above these considerations, Mussolini and his government received mixed reactions from American Protestants. To some, it was possible to make the comparison between the Fascists and the patriots at Lexington and Concord, while to others, Mussolini was nothing more nor less than the anti-Christ.[92]

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[91] Marcus Duffield, "Mussolini's American Empire," Harpers Magazine, CLIX (November, 1929), 661-672.

We have seen, then, the various shades of response to Fascism in America in general and in summary. We note the large and small groups of Italians, and their response pro and con. Also notable is the response of particular groups of Americans within specified bodies. Finally, the opinions and results of these opinions by the secular press have been examined. As is evident, no one trend is truly outstanding, but varied reactions are found throughout. Carter serves well as a guide to a few concluding principles: that the favor toward Fascism in America was generally a minority attitude with the exception of individual acts of the Fascist government which may have met with universal approval. He notes as well an interesting phenomenon in regard to the American reaction, namely that American visitors to Italy, especially if they met Mussolini personally, were highly impressed with the man himself and with the advances the country had made under his direction. They were therefore more inclined to think favorably of the Fascists. However, none of those who opposed Fascism had actually visited Italy.[93]

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[92] Carter, pp. 236-39.

[93] *Ibid.*, pp. 456-71.

It would seem, then, that the problem of understanding was central to the kind of reaction achieved in America. We cannot doubt that Americans would think of the news from Italy in terms of American procedures and ideals. News was received in the light of "The American Way," and this would have a great effect on individual feelings.

In concluding this chapter, it should be pointed out that, as we shall see in the rest of this study, the reaction of CAtholics in America was in many instances a sharing of the ideas and reactions of their fellow Americans mentioned here.

CHAPTER II

EARLY REACTIONS OF AMERICAN CATHOLICS

In this chapter, those areas will be explored which will give some indication of how CAtholics in America reacted to the phenomenon of Italian Fascism during its rise and early years. Primarily, this section will investigate the reaction found in the press of the Catholic community in America since here above all it will be most evident the way in which American Catholics thought and reacted. In this early period, John B. Carter notes in his doctoral dissertation, American CAtholics were influenced in their opinions primarily by what they considered to be the ambivalence on the part of the Vatican - sometimes seeming to favor, at other times opposing Mussolini, his party, and his platform. It is also true, as we shall see, that there was a certain identification with the Popular Party of Don Sturzo, the overthrow of which would be unsettling to some Catholics in America because, despite the fact that the Popolari were not a de iure CAtholic group, still, they seemed to be most closely aligned to the Catholic Church in their goals. American Catholics likewise had to contend with those of their number who were of Italian origin, and therefore judged things in a somewhat different light. Finally, as mentioned in the previous chapter, any American viewing the Italian scene did so through glasses tinted with the principles of American democracy.[1]

Some of the leaders of the American Catholic hierarchy were strong in their personal support of the Fascist regime early in its career. William Cardinal O'Connell, Archbishop of Boston, for example, returned from a visit to Italy in February of 1924 and praised the change that had been wrought in the nation since the advent of the Fascist government. He was especially impressed by the order and cleanliness evident everywhere, coupled with the newly discovered industry among the citizens.[2] Two years later the Archbishop of New York, Patrick Cardinal Hayes, likewise visited Italy, and he too came back highly impressed with the progress made there, particularly the favorable disposition of the new government directed toward Catholicism.[3] It should be noted that both these prelates had a basis of comparison to make between pre- and post-Fascist days in Italy. On February 26, 1922, in the midst of the political struggle just previous to the coming of the Fascists to power, when Italy was near its political ebb, both these members of the American hierarchy were present in Rome for the inauguration of the church of Santa Susanna as the American church in Rome.[4] It should also be noted that shortly after the arrival of Mussolini at the Quirinal, Cardinal O'Connell joined with a number of other United States Catholic clergymen in issuing statements in favor of Il Duce and his rise to power.[5]

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[1] John B. Carter, American Reactions to Italian Fascism, 1919-1933 (New York: Columbia University, 1954), p. 206. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation.)

[2] New York Times, February 29, 1924.

[3] New York Times, February 7, 1926.

Late in 1926, the Most Reverend Bernard J. Maloney, Bishop of Sioux Falls, was visiting Rome and had the distinction of being the first American bishop received in audience by Mussolini. During their brief twenty-minute interview, the bishop was greatly impressed by the Fascist leader, whom he assured of Papal approval for the Fascist programs, coupled with American support. He especially noted CAtholic support of the Fascist stand against birth control, which both men agreed was a crime.[6]

However, it should not be concluded that pro-Mussolini reactions were the only ones made by American CAtholic clergymen. More than one priest expressed opposition to the Fascist leader, as John Hearley notes. He mentions a former World War I chaplain, the Reverend Francis P. Duffy, whom he quotes as saying "Less Benito MUssolini and more Thomas Jefferson would be a mighty good dose for Italy at the present time."[7] Here we see that common American reaction--applying the principles of American democracy to another land as a proposed solution to its ills. Others, however, would oppose the Mussolini rise to power on different grounds, proposing that his method was not justified, even by the noble aims and practical goals he espoused. For example, Hearley quotes the Right Reverend John L. Bedford, who said "I think Mussolini has overreached himself," and the Reverend John B. Kelly: "That Mussolini has done good is evident, but it is at the price of civil liberty."[8]

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[4] USDS, Fletcher to State, Rome, February 27, 1922 (865.404/4). (Dispatch)

[5] John Hearley, Pope or Mussolini (New York: Macaulay Company, 1929), pp. 21-22. (Diocesan Newspapers, however provide no evidence of such statements.)

[6] New York Times, October 3, 1926.

These are certainly isolated instances, but there were few examples when Catholic clergymen spoke out on the subject outside of the Catholic press. They indicate that ambivalence which pervaded so much of Catholic thought at this time. Therefore, since the press gives the most comprehensive treatment of the subject, it is well to proceed to this area of Catholic life, recognizing it as the best example of overall opinion of Fascist activity, both of the totality of Fascism and the individual acts of the government in Italy.

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[7] Hearley, p. 18. (cf. New York World, April 1, 1928).

[8] Ibid.

We will later note in detail what Sister Benedetto finds in summary form, namely that in the first years of the Fascist experience in Italy, there was a pervading optimism among the most American CAtholics who felt that the turnover in government would very possibly bring about a better state of affairs between the Italian nation and the Vatican. Those who felt this way were convinced that Mussolini's supposed Catholicism was not only a fact, but a continuing influence on his governmental policy. Further, there was the feeling on the part of many that Fascism was good primarily because it had overcome the danger present in Italy of a possible Communish seizure of the reins of state. The press also echoed the rather general CAtholic opinion of support for the Popular Party, and therefore lamented its demise. However, the press was still a bit apprehensive, at least in some quarters, about the means which had been used to bring the Fascists to power, for there was general distrust of the violence which had gone on in the past, and there was some worry about the future--a wondering about whether the government would keep its head and not let its success allow it to push too far.[9]

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[9] Sister Mary Arnold Benedetto, American Opinion of the Rise of Fascism, 1921-1922, (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1921), pp. 42-51. (Unpublished Master of Arts Dissertation.)

Carter gives a summary of the editorial policy of three Catholic periodicals, and although we will soon study them in detail, it would be well to mention his opinions on them by way of introduction. Carter accuses the Jesuit weekly, America, of using its "Chronicle" section in a pro-Mussolini way. He says that in the "Chronicle" there were quoted " . . . only favorable comments on the Mussolini government from non-Catholic publications."[10] He sees this as due to the fact that the America quite naturally favored the Pope and the Church, and therefore opposed any one or any group who were against them. Therefore, they were anti-Communist, anti-Socialist, and applauded Mussolini's stand against these parties. He does, however, give the Jesuit publication credit for opposing extremist elements in the FAscist group.[11] As we shall see, however, in our study of articles in America later in the chapter, it seems that the immediate reaction of the magazine to the Fascist government after its inauguration was one merely listing, without comment, the events in Italy, both those opposing Mussolini and those favorable, as well as his plans and his speeches.

The CAtholic World, according to Carter, gives the greatest example of anti-Fascist sentiment. Its editors are said to have " . . . moved from an initial position of distrust to one of general antagonism to the Mussolini government."[12] They were especially opposed to Mussolini's anticlerical past, the limitations he imposed on personal liberty, his contempt for parliamentary methods, and his opposition to dissent towards the government and universal suffrage.

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[10] Carter, p. 210.

[11] Ibid., pp. 212-213.

Finally, Carter mentions Commonweal, a magazine which began publication shortly after the FAscist period began. This author feels that the lay-edited magazine showed the greatest amount of varied opinion. The editors printed vigorous pro- and anti-Fascist articles, while editorially they seemed to favor the government from the pragmatic standpoint that Mussolini's men achieved worthy results in Italy. However, they were critical in their editorials of Fascist theory in the negative plane.[13]

Specific Press Reactions

America magazine, in 1920, did not consider that the peril of Communism was imminent for Italy, and therefore quoted Arthur Benington, who felt that although there had been some who feared that Communism was growing in Italy, there never was such a danger there. Also quoted is George D. Herron:

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[12] Ibid., p. 213.

[13] Ibid., pp. 220-23.

> My opinion is that Italy will not become a Socialist state in the Marxian sense. Neither will Italy become Bolshevist and establish a proletarian dictatorship. The Italian is too individualistic, too fond of his freedom, to submit to such a regime as now prevails in Moscow.[14]

The Jesuit publication was, however, interested in and dedicated to the Partito Popolare, and in that same year, the editors listed the social aims of the Struzo group: to do away with state monopoly on education, to assure equal rights for all schools in regard to examinations and degrees, and to bring about a peasant proprietorship.[15] There were some reservations about the future of the Popular Party, however, which America recognized at the time of the 1921 party congress. At this congress, the Popolari offered support for the current government, a support which was shared by a statement from the leader of the new FAscist party, Benito Mussolini. At this time, Mussolini wanted it clearly understood that he and his followers were not anti-Catholic, that their violence had never been directed against Catholic places or religious persons. He pledged cooperation, even to the point of making an attempt to solve the Roman Question. The Fascist leader felt that Catholicism was especially valuable to the country as a moral force. However, America's editors were fearful of the dubious benefits which might be derived from an alliance between the Fascists and the Popolari. They noted that violence and lawlessness were outstanding in the recent history of Fascism and warned:

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[14] "The Industrial Settlement," America, XXIII (October 2, 1920), 556.

[15] "The Naples Conference," America, XXIII (May 15, 1920), 76.

> The Fascisti must give undeniable proof of their respect for liberty and authority before Signor Sturzo and his friends admit them to partnership.[16]

An article shortly thereafter appeared in the Catholic World, which was much more optimistic about the future success of the Popular Party. The author praised the Holy See for lifting its non expedit in regard to CAtholic participation in Italian politics, thereby allowing CAtholics to become more active in political affairs. Praise was greatest for the leader of the party, Don Luigi Sturzo. For this author the Popular Party could not fail:

> If the present is bright, in spite of the inevitable defects of human things, the future is still brighter. The People's Party may look toward the future with full confidence, since it derives its strength from the Cross which shines on its shield and is an unfailing sign of victory. In its social and Christian programme lies the secret of its victory.[17]

America, in 1922, returned to mild support for the Fascist tactics which were causing such a furor in Italy at that time. They did, it is true, call the attacks on law and order "inexcusable," but seem to agree somewhat with the Fascist explanation of the events. The Fascists claimed that it was necessary to meet the danger to Italy of the revolutionary policies of the Popolari and the Socialists, particularly the latter. Because of this, in the light of the fact that the legal powers of the state at the time could not contain the unrest, the Fascists felt dutybound to protect the law and the constitution.[18] Even the terrorism by the Fascisti after the March on Rome was partially explained away by the editors of America. They noted, in 1924, that during the elections of April of that year, Fascist groups destroyed some meeting places of Catholic organizations. However, the editors felt that this was not so much an indication of anti-Catholicism as it was a way of harrassing the Popular Party, which had been identified with many CAtholics, primarily because its leader was the priest. It noted, however, that some bishops protested, as did Osservatore Romano, but that Mussolini had made no disavowal.[19] It seems obvious that America had come a long way from its initial support of the Popolari and distrust of the Fascisti. Now, in 1924, the editors were acknowledging and seemingly favoring the downfall of the Struzo group, while at the same time making excuses for, one might say rationalizing, the activities of the Fascists.

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[16] "Congress of Popular Party," America, XXVI (November 19, 1921), 100.

[17] Giuseppe Quirico, "The Rise of the People's Party in Italy," CAtholic World, CXIV (January, 1922), 506-515.

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[18] "The Popular Party and the Socialists," America, XXVI (April 15, 1922), 604.

[19] "Fascist Violence," America, XXXI (May 17, 1924), 102.

With the advent of the Fascisti to Rome, America was alone among the Catholic periodicals which sought to cover topics of news. Even at this time, they saw some hope of salvation for the Popular Party in the fact that MUssolini had introduced, along with his followers, some reform measures which were acceptable to Don Sturzo and his group. However, they did admit of opposition to the suggested election reform measures which the FAscists soon proposed. At that time, Mussolini was contemplating the possibility of legislating a three-fifths majority in the Chamber of Deputies for the party polling a simple majority of votes by the electorate. America noted, however, that the Popolari accepted the direct method of taxation proposed by the Fascists, as well as the sale of local telephone companies to private capital and the reduction of the various levels of police.[20] Again, two weeks later, the Jesuit journal indicated acceptance of Fascist policy to the extent that the editors were willing to concede that Mussolini had tempered his former anticlerical views. The rumor was reported that Il Duce was open to the possibility of two cardinals being appointed as senators of the kingdom, a move which would need the approval of the Pope, according to law, and for which there was no precedent in Italy since 1866. They concluded that, "If Mussolini lives up to this program, Italy will be the gainer."[21] That same issue of America carried an article entitled "Who Are the Fascists?" This article was generally analytical, noting the patriotism that pervaded the party, a patriotism which seemed truly based on loyalty to the cause of Italy. However, the author felt that it was really anti-Communism which held the groups together. He cautioned that they would need to keep their heads in the wake of power, and especially that "They must not meet violence with violence."[22] By the end of December, America was able to herald the restoration of the crucifix and the portrait of the king to the classrooms of Italy. This, they felt, showed that MUssolini, despite his past mistakes, now saw the need of fidelity to God and the welfare of the country. These acts, it was hoped, would counteract the influence of the anti-social, anti-Christian propaganda of Communist and infidel leaders.[23] For this magazine, therefore, there seems to have been a hesitant acceptance of the new order of things in Italy--an initial hope that this new order would include the predominantly Catholic Popular Party, but a willingness to accept that party's demise, as long as the Fascist program was acceptable and successful.

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[20] "The Mussolini Measures," America, XXVIII (November 18, 1922), 99-100.

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[21] "Mussolini and the Vatican," America, XXVIII (December 2, 1922), 147.

[22] Thomas O'Hagan, "Who Are the Fascisti?" America, XXVIII (December 2, 1922), 150-151.

[23] "The Crucifix Restored to the Schools," America, XXVIII (December 23, 1922), 218.

It was not until February of 1923 that the Catholic World chose to comment on the Fascist takeover in Italy. At that time, the comment was made that the recent revolution in Italy was possible only because other governments had failed. It was thought by the editors that this was a further example of the failure of top-heavy governmental organizations to cope with the problems of the modern day. When such a state of affairs exists, unofficial groups take over to fill the void. For this reason, it was held that Mussolini had become a savior for this country, and the fear was that "If Mussolini fails, perhaps Italy will be nearer to the point of collapse than most persons suspect."[24]

This same review was even more favorable to Mussolini in the following issue, in that the editors hailed the internal reconstruction of Italy, brought about for reasons of nationalism. They thought anti-Communism and anti-Freemasonry would make of the Fascist government a party completely committed to peace. The indication was that Mussolini would not want to involve himself in international militarism because it would distract him from directing all his efforts towards the problems affecting Italy from within itself. The editors did note, however, that the Popular Party continued to have some reservations about Fascism, although they were not opposed to it as yet.[25] Again, the American experience is seen as being tempered by a watchful glance cast toward Catholics in Italy. In May of 1923, this watchfulness was even more pronounced in the Catholic World. Some concern and reservation was admitted by the editors, who felt that much depended on the outcome of events in Italy, not only for the solution of its internal problems, but also for the good of all Europe. Much could depend, they said, on the way in which Mussolini conducted his statesmanship, and certainly thus far he had made positive contributions. However, the magazine considered it too early to accord him complete support:

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[24] "What Fascism Means," CAtholic World, CXVI (February, 1923), 694.

> But we are not as yet prepared to hail Mussolini either as a great constructive statesman or as a godsend to the Church. We confess that we are still--perhaps unreasonably--suspicious of the wisdom of his methods, which seem high-handed, and occasionally violent.[26]

Meanwhile, in that same year, 1923, America continued its mild support of the Fascist regime, still echoing the thoughts of those who saw danger in what could develop in such an unsettled political framework as Italy possessed in this time. In March of 1923, the Jesuits wrote that much of the good that was taking place in Italy was because of the opposition to Freemasonry by the government, since it was due to the Freemasons that the country had been demoralized after World WAr I. However, they feared the danger that could possibly result, namely that one bad form of influence could be replaced by another:

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[25] "With the Fascists in Italy," Catholic World, CXVI (March, 1923), 842.

[26] "The Only Statesman in Europe?" Catholic World CXVII (May, 1923), 261-62.

> It is hoped by all lovers of order and authority that the Fascismo, while fighting Freemasonry, will not erect itself into another underground power in the State, and that Premier Mussolini, who had already given many signs of a sense of justice and duty, will keep it in proper subordination to the constitutional authority of the country.[27]

America did note, howeber, an increase, not only in benefits to Catholicism, but in activity for God and country on the part of Catholics in Italy. The feeling was that the Italian CAtholics were taking their cue from the activities of the government for the betterment of the masses. Catholics in Italy were urged to continue in this laudable pursuit, recognizing that the remedies for current social ills were in their possession--the Christian tradition.[28]

During the remainder of the year 1923, internal problems in Italy were more specifically treated on the editorial pages of America. In July, Don Sturzo resigned as head of the Popular Party, although he still remained a leader of the group. His departure was not lamented in the magazine, again in seeming agreement with the policy it had established previously of favoritism for the Populari, but not of an irrevocable commitment to it or to its leaders. The magazine, in fact, almost rejoiced at Sturzo's resignation,noting that the priest-politician had been, of late, an embarrassment to the Vatican because of heavy criticism aimed at him by the Fascisti, particularly because of his stance against election reform. His departure was seen, therefore, as "a great personal triumph for Mussolini."[29] It certainly was a personal triumph, and one, it would seem, with which America was prone to agree. When, in November of 1923, it was evident that not all the critics of Fascism had been silenced, America reported the dissension within the ranks in Italy, a fact which the editors chose to explain as stemming not merely from the unconstitutional origins of Fascist power, which they admitted, but also the discordant elements which wer wedded together in this one party. The editors were ready to blame the greatest part of the opposition on Freemasons and anti-Catholics, because of the dissolution of Freemasonry and the liberal governmental attitude toward Catholicism which marked Fascist policy. The editors felt that the hope that the new government would weather the storm of criticism was centered in the Premier himself, for as a dictator, Mussolini was both a strength and a weakness to his government.[30]

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[27] "Fascisti and Masons," America, XXVIII (March 3, 1923), 459-60.

[28] "CAtholic Activities," America, XXIX (May 26, 1923), 122-23.

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[29] "Resignation of Don Sturzo," America, XXIX (July 21, 1923), 314-315.

In 1924, the Catholic World was willing to accept, if not endure, the Fascist government. The occasion for the editorial was the victory of the Fascists at the polls in April, 1924, a victory which made Mussolini even more entrenched than ever before. In June, the editors commented that at least there would be hope that the Church would benefit from this electoral majority:

> While some Catholics have been rather distrustful of the Mussolini regime, many more have seen in it great hopes of good for the Church. All Catholics will pray that their hopes may be realized.[31]

By the end of that year, however, the Catholic World was not willing to admit that all would be well with even the religious situation of the Italian nation, and that Il Duce was not all as favorable to Christianity as might first have been thought. The editors noted that in the New York Times Magazine recently, it was said that Mussolini's spiritual master was Nietzsche. Therefore, the Catholic World noted that Mussolini had received praise from Catholic wuarters because of his actions of favoritism to the Church. This to some indicated an abandonment of his previous atheism. However, in the light of his admission that he was a Nietzschean, it must be admitted that his CAtholicism was doubtful, since a Nietzschean Christian would be a "queer bird" indeed![32]

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[30] "Dissensions in the Fascist RAnks," America, XXX (November 24, 1923), 123.

[31] "The Elections in Italy," Catholic World, CXIX (June, 1924), 412.

Late in 1924, a new Catholic periodical made its appearance on the American scene, the lay-edited Commonweal. Its second and third issues carried articles by L. S. Wood on the condition of the government in Italy. This author felt Mussolini had saved Italy from political anarchy, and that he desired to regularize and constitutionalize the country as soon as possible. His advances since coming to power had been many, and especially notable was his ability to control his followers, both during and after the March on Rome.[33] Wood saw those followers of Il Duce who were extremists as working out of ambition and lust for power, but the hope was that Il Duce could continue to control them, especially since he and those around him on the higher levels of government were men who were, " . . . earnestly intent on pulling Italy out of the mess into which it was sinking, and establishing efficient government."[34]

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[32] "Not This Man but Nietzsche," Catholic World, CXX (June, 1924), 412.

[33] L. J. S. Wood, "Mussolini and the Law," Commonweal, I (November 19, 1924), 42-43.

America in 1924 continued to hail the reforms by which Mussolini government made the political state in Italy more honest and the economy of the nation more sound. Likewise, the government showed an attitude which was "tolerant and not unfriendly" toward the Papacy.[35] Even the Matteotti murder of June that same year did not basically change the editorial policy of this review. America felt, with others, of course, that the Premier had nothing to do with the Deputy's murder, especially since Il Duce himself had provided legal forms of security to rid the party of undesirables. Also, Mussolini was felt to have given ample evidence that he stood "for progress, but for progress which is coupled with law and order."[36]

Later in the year, after the Liberal Party Congress at Leghorn which refused to cooperate with or support the Fascisti, America adopted Mussolini's reaction in paraphrase, indicating its sympathy with the sentiments of Il Duce:

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[34] L. J. S. Wood, "Mussolini and His Future," Commonweal, I (November 26, 1924), 74-75.

[35] "Mussolini Resigns Dictatorial Powers," America, XXX (January 12, 1924), 296.

[36] "Premier Reforms Fascists," America, XXXI (August 2, 1924), 368.

> Unconcerned about the attitude of the liberals, Fascism will continue its wonderful work for the reconstruction of Italy, and will be willing to work with any party that desires to cooperate. But in the meantime the party will go on alone because its good work for Italy has only just begun.[37]

The year 1925 saw articles much in the same line, as far as the periodicals mentioned thus far were concerned. They can best be summed up in three representative articles from those magazines which paid any attention to the Fascist regime in its early years in Italy: America, Commonweal, and the Catholic World. The Commonweal article, again by L. J. S. Wood, indicated that Fascism, for success, needed two allies--the House of Savoy and the Roman CAtholic Church. Up to this point, there was a great deal of success in the Fascist program, good political policy, and sincerity. The result was the rebuilding of "strong moral fiber for a good Italy." Any opposition to Mussolini was nearly summarized by Wood: Mussolini's enemies were the enemies of the Church.[38]

The America article was likewise favorable to the Fascist regime, holding that the Fascist revolution in Italy is ably summed up in the suppression of Freemasonry. Stephen Grayson held that Italy was on the brink of collapse because government officials were taking their orders from Masonic Lodges. In this defense of the Fascists' anti-Masonic measures, the author wishes to make clear that Americans, in transferring their ideals to the Italian scene are bound to make an error in judgment. Americans are convinced of the value of democracy, and for this reason see it as the only possible government for the best interests of the people of other countries as well. However, Italy is now, at least in one sense, more democratic; suffrage was such that government, according to Grayson, was by consent of the governed, however, the total picture in Italy would not be acceptable in America, although it was perfectly acceptable and right for the Italian nation.[39] America, at least to this period of time, was willing to encourage, and not merely accept, theFascist regime.

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[37] "Premier Mussolini," America, XXXII (October 25, 1924), 28.

[38] L. J. S. Wood, "Holy Year in Rome," Commonweal, II (June 17, 1925), 161-62.

The Catholic World, on the other hand, took strong exception to the Fascist government in 1925. Their opposition, therefore had developed from distrust, and from hope that all would at least go well for the Church, to outright hostility. At this time, the editors felt that authority, radically Catholic in principle, was being misused in Italy:

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[39] Stephen Grayson, "Mussolini and the Masons," America, XXXIII (July 11, 1925), 295-96.

> But when action, discipline, authority and social solidarity itself are being promoted with no Christian motive, still more when they are to lead to a godless State or to a god-state, then it is not well for Christians to join with their promoters.[40]

For the first time in any of the periodicals, we see a theme which will often recur--that the State in Italy was being exalted to the extent that it was totally out of proportion to its true worth. The editors of the CAtholic World continued their opposition to the Mussolini government in the following year, seeing the actions of the dictator as those of a madman. The editors especially feared his extreme nationalism, which was now beginning to show signs of militarism, a tendency which could lead to another European war. They note that he has been praised for the actions favoring Catholicism, but in the light of his other actions, the editors do not feel that these were sincere. Rather, they feel that his constant reference to the restoration of the crucifix is becoming "obnoxious." At this time, only the Pope, if anyone, can stop him. For the future, the Catholic World felt that the regime would end in " . . . something akin to disaster. A reaction in favor of liberty will set in." However, despite this prospect, the Church would nonetheless suffer, for it would be accused of being a friend to the dictator, forgetting that the Pope was trying and would continue to try to withstand the excesses of Fascism.[41]

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[40] "Fascism," Catholic World, CXLII (November, 1925), 230-32.

The same year was the seventh centenary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi, and the magazine Catholic Mind made its first reference to Il Duce when it printed a translation of Mussolini's speech in praise of Il Poverello, sent to Italian governmental representatives abroad. The only comment made was the editorial note that here was evidence of the attitude of the Premier, even when dealing with the subject of this great saint, that Fascist doctrine was extremely strong in its nationalism, for St. Francis was represented as an Italian first and foremost.[42]

In May of 1926, Commonweal printed another article strongly favorable to the Fascisti. Harvey Wickham objected that in America, Mussolini was being present by some as a new Satan, to replace Lenin and the Kaiser. Answering objections Wickham noted this was true, that Mussolini suppressed some newspapers and deported newsmen, but this was due primarily to the revolutionary situation in Italy, and the newspapers were nothing more than opposition party organs. Meanwhile, Wickham, living at the time in

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[41] "Mad Mussolini," Catholic World, CXII (March, 1926), 838.

[42] "Mussolini's Tribute," Catholic Mind, XX (September 22, 1926), 349-50.

Rome, defended the advances made by the new government, especially the prosperity which overcame much hunger and starvation among the people of Italy. The author then used a strong metaphor--he said that Mussolini, in solving the political problems of Italy was like a man making an omelette, and yet his critics refused to allow him to crack the eggs (heads). These critics were grouped by the author under the categories of Masons, Mafia, and political refugees. Meanwhile, Il Duce had completely legalized his government by every known means, even elections. Finally, as far as the Catholic Church was concerned, Wickham let this statement of Mussolini speak for itself: "No one can sarve Fascismo without being a good Catholic." A postscript was added to the article by the author on April 7, an attempt had been made on the life of the Premier by an English-speaking foreigner. The attempt failed: "Te Deum Laudamus."[43]

During this period, America was content merely to chronicle the events in Italy with little comment. In February of 1926, they noted that despite the limitations imposed on popular freedoms, the people of Italy were strong in their support of Mussolini and the Fascist government, mainly because of the civil peace, economic progress, and social and industrial activity that had flourished in Italy since the March on Rome.[44] In March of that same year, the labor legislation outlawing strikes and lockouts was praised as an " . . . undisguised attack on Socialist doctrine. . . "[45] Finally, the anti-birth control stance of the Fascist government was hailed, and America noted its wisdom for the good of the country: " . . . in the multiplication of children lies the nation's greatest riches as well as the strongest investment for invincible world-expansion."[46]

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[43] Harvey Wickham, "Baiting the Duce," Commonweal, III (May 5, 1926), 712-15.

The first issue of America for 1927 carried two references to an allocution by Pope Pius XI in a secret consistory held December 20, 1926. In it, the Pope made reference to Church-State relations, especially as they pertained to Italy. He was particularly concerned with the way in which the church in Italy was favored by the Fascist government, while at the same time living under the results of the unification of 1870. The editorial page of the magazine noted that the Pope decried the concept that the State is an end in itself, and the citizen a mere means to that end. The editorial comment stated that in America, since its foundation, these principles of individual worth were the principles of the founding fathers, but that, unfortunately over the last fifty years, the concept of overlord state was becoming more and more accepted, as the state made encroachments on family, children, and schools. Therefore, the editors called for a return to original American principles, ending the over-control by the state.[47] While this certainly was meant to apply primarily to the American scene, with the reference to the Italian political situation merely a means to begin the discussion, it is noteworthy at this point that the editors of America were beginning to think of the Fascist concept of the State as dangerous, not only to personal liberty, but to the liberty of the Church as well.

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[44] "Mussolini's Popularity," America, XXXIV (February 6, 1926), 389.

[45] "Strikes Made Illegal," America, XXXIV (March 27, 1926), 557.

[46] "Against Modern Social Enemies," America, XXXV (May 8, 1926), 76.

In this same issue, January 1, 1927, the "Chronicle" section of America, in referring to the Pope's allocution, made note of the fact that he decried the recent attempts on the life of the Italian Premier. Pius XI took the opportunity to refer to Mussolini as " . . . the man who with such exemplary energy governs the fate of the country as to make us believe that Italy herself is in danger whenever he is endangered."[48] Passing reference is also made, however, to the fears of the Pope that Fascism is creating for itself a monopoly on individual liberties.

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[47] "The Pontiff and Civil Authority," America, XXXVI (January 1, 1927), 275-76.

[48] "Warning Against Fascist Monopoly," America, XXXVI (January 1, 1927), 274.

The editorial pages of America spoke again of Fascism in November, 1927, when the newest election reforms suggested by Mussolini were noted, especially the limitation on suffrage. America was strongly in favor of such limitation, saying that the major political and moral issues facing a country could not be solved merely by counting heads, that extension of suffrage merely increases quantity. not quality. The only danger seen was that Mussolini and his Grand Council, by law, decided who would qualify to vote, a condition which would create a benevolent,despotism in Italy. Herein lies the problem, for to the self-proposed question of whether Il Duce could be benevolent, the editors of America indicate some doubt, on the grounds that so many of his ideas of government are false, and have been condemned by the Holy See, "the sole voice in Italy which dares to criticize Mussolini."[49] Again, we note a development in the thought of the Jesuit editors. With the help of papal allocutions and the test of time upon the Fascist government, they were willing to begin to question their support of Fascism, yes even to doubt its morality and its practical good.

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[49] "Mussolini and the Vote," America, XXXVIII (November 26, 1927), 150.

The attitude of America toward Mussolini continued to cool. In April, 1928, an article by Paul L. Blakely noted that Mussolini was beginning to extend his control to the point where he considered education as the "fundamental, priordial and exclusive duty of the state." The fact that Mussolini had been successful, and that many advances were made in Italy was noted, and for this he was praised, but his "statolatry" was getting out of hand. Blakely noted that the influence here seems to be Hegelian, that the power which controls the state was thought to be the source and sanction of all rights and duties. Therefore, man exists for the state, and his Church is nothing more than a valuable part of the State's police system. The only hope seen for Mussolini was that maybe he would see it as a misfortuen to war against the Holy See.[50]

This "statolatry" was a point that soon became evident to Commonweal as well. The editors noted that overstress on the value of the State was bringing detriment to the concept of individual worth. An editorial in April, 1928, mentioned the recent Supreme Court decision in America on the famous Oregon Case. This defended the primary right to education by the parents. This was compared to Mussolini's attempts to reserve all education to the State.[51]

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[50] Paul L. Blakely, "This Mussolini!" America, XXXIX (April 14, 1929), 16-17.

[51] "Mussolini Again," Commonweal, VII (April 11, 1928), 1280.

While we note that all these magazines were beginning to see flaws in the Fascist fabric, we might well wonder at this point as to the motivation for such acknowledgment. It seems that in the case of *America* and *Commonweal*, the reason was based on the feat that the State in Italy would rival the Church in education and possibly take over this function which the Church wished to keep to itself. On the other hand, the *Catholic World*, while certainly realizing this as a possibility, kept its arguments against FAscism on the plane of individual rights of whatever nature.

In 1928, the *Catholic World* continued to evidence fear toward growing Italian militarism, and suggested that Italy join the United States and others in a disarmament agreement. However, they doubted Il Duce would subscribe to such an agreement, for he considered himself to be another Caesar or Napolean, who were certainly bloody idols. If he did act toward disarmament, he would begin to atone for his sins against democracy.[52]

A surprising, if momentary, shift in policy, however, is noticed in a *Catholic World* article of May, 1929. The writer, an American visitor to Italy at that time, reports on the orderliness and prosperity evident in Italy since the Fascist takeover. There was also some discontent noted among the people due to the increase in taxes and curtailment of freedom of the press. The clergy in Italy, however, were seen as no longer hostile to FAscism, and support of Mussolini was quite strong, and general throughout the country. The article closes by asking what would be the alternative to Fascism. The author felt that should benevolent Fascism topple, the parable of the seven devils more evil than the first would apply.[53] This was, however, a momemtary lapse from the policy which the Catholic World held of constant opposition in one degree or another, to the Fascist government, and this from general, political and philosophical grounds.

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[52] "Will Mussolini Help Outlaw War?" *Catholic World* CXXVIII (November, 1929), 234.

To summarize the feelings of these magazines, as it is noticed, Catholic World seems to have taken the most decisive stand against Italian Fascism from the very beginning. Only in isolated cases was this motivated by ecclesiastical happenings. The editors of this magazine show that their approach was on political grounds. On the other hand, America and Commonweal favored the Fascists from the beginning. This has been seen to be mainly because of the actions of the Fascists toward the Catholic Church in Italy. Only later, when the Fascist program was seen to include such an extreme nationalism that it bordered on worship of the State, did these magazines oppose the Mussolini government, and this for the rather pragmatic reason, mainly, that the Church would most certainly suffer should the State become all-powerful.

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[53] Albert R. BAndini, "Two Winters in Italy," Catholic World, CXXIX (May, 1929), 172-179.

The following chapter will define this area even more clearly, for it will deal with a central element of Church-State affair, the Latern Treaties. Then, the editorial policies of these magazines can be more critically analyzed.

Before we proceed to this, however, it would be well to examine the opinions, that were expressed, of selected diocesan newspapers throughout the country. Here, we will examine those which are notable either by the importance of the diocese in which they are printed, or because of a notably strong editorial policy. Also, the newspapers were chosen with an eye to investigating possible differences in widespread geographic locations.

One of the more noteworthy features of the diocesan press, however, is its lack of interest, at least at this period, in events of significance in the world unless they touched directly upon the inner life of the Church. Thus, for example, during the rise and early successes of the Fascist Party in Italy, the Brooklyn _Tablet_, New York _Catholic News_, and Boston _Pilot_ had nothing at all to say about events in Italy in their editorial columns. For the most part, they were concerned with "purely" Catholic news--either of the Universal Church, or more usually of a merely local nature. Spiritual essays on upcoming feasts and eulogies of recently deceased clergy and religious were most evident. An example of this, to the extreme degree, is found in the Brooklyn Tablet. At the time of the rise of Mussolini to power, and during the weeks of the March on Rome and the formation of the Fascist government, the Diocese of Brooklyn was initiating a two-million-dollar campaign to build new high schools. The pages of the Tablet, therefore, were filled with news of this campaign, as was the editorial page. The March on Rome was mentioned, very briefly, in a summary article from N.C.W.C. News Service, without comment or interpretation.

Only one example of any editorial opinion could be found in the Brooklyn newspaper during this early period. It seemed that the editors had some sympathy with the Sturzo Populari, and shortly after the Fascist takeover, when, the first election reform was suggested to ensure continued Fascist supremacy, the Tablet editors wrote in favor of the opposition the Popolari were giving to the proposed election measures. They noted that the Popular Party felt that the proposed law would subject the Church to the whims of any minority party that could muster enough votes to get into office. While the Fascists, by opposing Masonic membership in their party and acting favorably toward religious education, were obviously favorable to the Church, the Popular Party was the only one in Italy which seemed to offer true social reconstruction. The fear of the editors was that if the Popolari went down to defeat, the peasants of the land would be neglected and thereby handed over to the Socialists.[54]

An exception, in these days if not later, to the general practice of diocesan newspapers of not entering into discussion of world events was the Chicago archdiocesan newspaper, The New World. When news began to spread of the vigorous action taken by the Fascists against Communist and Socialist violence, The New World noted it approvingly. The editors remarked that this new party was nationalistic, with a conservative attitude, especially as regards law and order. Important, too, was the fact that it was successful:

> The conservative is not necessarily a coward. AS a matter of fact, in Italy he is showing himself to be a brave man, and fortunately by his bravery saving his country . . . What is happening in Italy, though it may not be the most pleasant thing in the world, is exactly what must happen in any country threatened by terror and violence. These Fasciti [sic] may be set down as extreme nationalists only because they are not set down as extreme madmen. They represent the purposes of the vast majority . . . the Fasciti have taken up the challenge thrown to them and they mean to bettle to the day they will succeed.[55]

Again The New World, after the March on Rome, spoke favorably of the Fascist party, particularly because of the stress it put on patriotism, as distinguished from the internationalism proposed by the Socialists. Socialism was also faulted because it " . . . broke down all religious restraint, and only in too many instances weaned away whole towns and villages from any allegiance to the Church." The post-war patriotism seen in Italy and laid at the feet of the FAscisti, was particularly laudable for this--that it did overcome the Socialist forces. However, it was feared that while the Fascists has shown strength, courage, and vigor, Italy was not thereby relieved of her problems: "Italy, divided within, and surrounded by hardy and strong enemies without is in for difficult times." England and Jugo-Slavia were seen as posing threats to Italy's imperialistic claim to the Mediterranean and friendship with Germany.

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[54] "Popular Party Refuses to Surrender to Mussolini," The Tablet, May 5, 1923.

[55] "The Advice Taken," The New World, March 11, 1921.

Meanwhile, the same editorial noted, Catholics were no longer prohibited from participation in political life, although clerics had been enjoined from doing so by the Holy Father. The only negative feature of the Fascist success was seen to be the pushing aside of the Popular Party, " . . . Christian socialism in action." In the light of all this, The New World wished to wait before judging on the Fascist attitude toward the Church, although, the editors noted, "Hitherto the record has been sadly mixed." The conclusion was simply stated: "Italy is in for trying times."[56]

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[56] "Fascismo," The New World, November 10, 1922.

Just before Christmas of that same year, the editors looked at Italy and saw a peaceful revolution, which had not seriously interfered with domestic or foreign affairs of the country. However, Mussolini was recognized as a dictator, although they did not judge that he had acted to suppress free speech.[57] In August of 1923, the editors of The New World noted with approval the decision of Mussolini to ban gambling in Italy: " . . . Italy will be better without it." They noted that although this law might not be too popular in Italy, like other strong measures of Il Duce, " . . . Mussolini has a way of being obeyed."[58]

At last, in 1924, The New World examined the relationship between the Fascist regime and the Church. The editors noted that Italians are almost by nature Catholic, despite the various past events of anticlericalism, therefore, Mussolini was a smart politician, not to mention a man possessive of a great deal of common sense, to favor the Church, as for example making one of his first acts the restoration of the crucifix. But more specifically, and to his credit, Mussolini was acknowledged to have set out to correct the evil results of the political theories of the nineteenth century, and " . . . to reconstruct the new Italy on the spiritual lines of the Catholic Church." His purpose was admitted to be the formation of " . . . one close spiritual bond (of family, nation and religion) which will solidify and strengthen that great people." What would come of it? The New World editors were assured that the Fascist regime would be successful: "Marching under the cross, and under the force of their rediscovered ideals, they are to play a wonderful part, not only in their own country, but in Europe as well."[59]

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[57] "Italy Under Fascism," The New World, December 22, 1922.

[58] "Why Not," The New World, August 10, 1923.

Two months later, the Chicago paper was not quite so pro-Fascist, for the editors noticed that liberty had vanished from the Italian scene, even though law, order and prosperity now reigned. They saw as the "weak point in the armor of Mussolini . . . reliance on force, and its [sic] frank resort to it." The end of the editorial betrays the reason for this opposition, however, for the editors felt the Popular Party was regaining stature in Northern Italy, despite the suppression of opposition by the Fascists, coupled with the breaking up of enemy political meetings and the ban on political propaganda. It was felt that the man, Il Duce, was the cause of Fascist success, and the question was asked--what would happen to FAscism once this man was gone?[60] Still, the Fascist attitude toward the Church was seen to be resulting in much good will, and

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[59] "Italy and the Church," The New World, February 1, 1924.

[60] "Mussolini's Victory," The New World, May 2, 1924.

The New World editors, then thinking the time was right to assure the Pope of some redress from the wrongs of 1870, by providing him with some sort of temporal power, without destroying Italian unity. Therefore, all nations were called upon to aid the Vatican in acquiring " . . . a complete and adequate guarantee of papal liberty." Mussolini was thought more than slightly favorable to such a plan, for he is quoted as having stated: "I think and affirm that the one great universal idea which exists in Rome today is that radiated by the Vatican."[61] Therefore, the editors felt that the time was right, that Italy was prepared and that all the world would soon join the effort to assure freedom for the Papacy.

The New World, at the time of the Matteoti crisis, in the summer of 1924, reexamined its position. It felt that the growing menace of Communism and the other post-war ills of Italy demanded strong action: "If any country in Europe needed a dictator after the war, it was Italy." However, while dictatorships served a real function, particularly that of "cleaning house," there was danger that " . . . once cleaned, seven devils worse than the one that had been driven out come to take their abode in the house that is swept and garnished." This, they felt, was the problem in Italy. Mussolini, they felt, had saved the country from destruction, but once this had been accomplished, Mussolini and those who took their cue from him, proceeded to destroy representative government and to deride democracy. It was felt that this was unfortunate, that "Democracy may not have about it all the perfections that its champions claim, but it is better than a dictatorship. As a permanent diet the dictator is rather an indigestible thing."[62] A month later, the sequel to the coming to power of Fascism was again questioned: "No matter the victory of Fascism it was based on force. That some such movement was needed in Italy cannot justify the permanence of violent methods." The problem that Mussolini had caused for himself, however, was that he was being " . . . menaced by the very violence he countenanced." They felt that Mussolini had acted in such a way as to seem to favor the principle that the end justifies the means, and that the end, prosperity and order, had actually taken place. However, they did not consider such a state of affairs, when judged in the light of the consequences of such violence, permanent. They concluded that: "Bolshevism certainly did threaten Italy, and Mussolini saved it from the scourge. But it now appears that there is and must be another alternative for Italy than FAscism."[63]

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[61] "Liberty of the Pope," The New World, May 30, 1924.

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[62] "Dictatorship," The New World, July 4, 1924.

[63] "Force," The New World, August 1, 1924.

Again in the following month, the archdiocesan weekly showed its preference of alternative: the Popolari of Don Sturzo, described as " . . . a political group of vision and strength pledged to CAtholic principles and democratic progress . . . " It was noted that the Church ahd warned against the use of violence by the Fascists, although it was willing to go along with the law and order it brought with it: "Even though a tyranny was set up, it was surely a better alternative than mobocracy." Still, while Northern Italy saw new life for the Popolari, it was not denied that Mussolini was the leader of the country. He was acknowledged as having recognized that Catholicism and Italy had to go together.[64]

Once the Popolari were dead forever, The New World editors admitted that Fascism had been good for Catholicism in Italy--that it had once more been recognized as the national religion. Even though there had been some differences between the Vatican and the Quirinal, these might well be expected--such conflicts were inevitable in a new government. Still, the point was clear that Catholic meant universal--that Italian nationalism would not change the international character of the papacy, nor would the Pope become a mere vassal of the Italian State.[65]

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[64] "Some Merit," The New World, September 26, 1924.

[65] "No Likelihood," The New World, May 11, 1928.

The only other notable references to the Fascist experience in Italy during the early years is to be found in the newspaper of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, The Monitor. The editors noted the accession to power of the FAscist party in an editorial early in December, 1922. They described the takeover as " . . . one of the most marvelous political phenomena that have marked the history of any country for many years." They showed favoritism toward the Mussolini government because of the sad state of affairs in Italy after the war. They felt that Leninist emissaries were all over the country " . . . who were to sow the seeds of Communism and Bolshevism." Further, the country was severely threatened with a collapse of the values of law and order, while protection of life and property were at a new low. Therefore, it was felt that the Fascist government was acceptable, as well as being accepted by the people of Italy. There was, however, a hesitancy in wholehearted acceptance of the new regime:

> The attitude of the new government towards the Catholic Church is said to be friendly. But politicians often become pious not for their souls' sake but for the salvation of the government.[66]

Two weeks later, the same editorial pages included further thoughts by Hillaire Belloc, of a mixed nature on the ultimate effect of the new government in Italy upon the Church. It was noted approvingly that professional politicians wwere "bundled out bag and baggage from the Italian government." Therefore, it was thought that there would be a two-fold effect upon the Church in Italy. On the good side, Masonic influences were thereby crushed, and the evil influences of parliamentary government, which had been a disservice to Italy, were overcome. However, on the other side, Belloc feared that the nationalistic character of the Fascist philosophy was out of step with the international, universal character of the Catholic Church.[67] As the Fascists grew in power and sought to make their will effective on the nation by the passage of certain laws, The Monitor, like so many other Catholic journals, showed a preference for the fortunes of the Popular Party of Don Sturzo. The editors felt that if election reform were effected, the Popular Party would soon no longer exist. Although the Popolari were not strictly Catholic, it was admitted that they seemed to defend the rights of the Church better than any other group. Further, the Sturzo party was felt to be the only one really interested in the peasant and labor groups of Italy, and it was feared that if the

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[66] "The Fascista Government," The Monitor, December 5, 1922.

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[67] Hillaire Belloc, "Effects of Fascismo upon Fortunes of the Catholic Church," The Monitor, December 16, 1922.

Popular party were to die, these groups would be abandoned to the false and injurious forces of Socialism.[68]

An interesting sidelight to the editorial policy of The Monitor is learned from an account of 1928. In October of that year, it was noted that the Italian people of San Francisco, under the leadership of Armande Pedrina and James A. Bacigalupi, were instituting a campaign to finance a newly founded Chair of Italian Culture at the University of California. The proposed action had origianlly been suggested by the Archbishop of San Francisco, Edward J. Hanna, who was quoted as favoring the Chair: " . . . in the effort to promote a knowledge of (and) to diffuse a more general acquaintance with Italian masterpieces as wellas the sweetest of all tongues."[69] There was, therefore, some obvious pro-Italian spirit on the West Coast.

A final indication of the thought of The Monitor can be seen from a two-fold program, origianlly suggested by The Echo, diocesan newspaper of Buffalo, New York, for the solution of the economic ills of the world. They had proposed national planning and scheduling of production, coupled with a properly graded and honestly enforced income tax. The Monitor's editors saw the advisability of this, and to enforce their contention, noted that: "Mussolini and Stalin have taught the advisability of national economic planning.

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[68] "Party Refuses Surrender," The Monitor, May 12, 1923.

[69] "Italian Chair founded at U. of California," The Monitor, October 13, 1928.

it must come."[70] It would seem, therefore, that this newspaper had some reservations about the effect of Fascist rule in Italy, but only as regards the relationship between government and the CAtholic Church.

In Davenport, Iowa, the diocesan newspaper, the Catholic Messenger, had but two articles on the rise of Fascism, both early in the Mussolini reign. The first appeared on November 23, 1922, just about a month after the March on Rome. The editors noted the March and gave the opinion that it might well be a help to Italy, which had so much political turmoil of late. They noted that the March did not achieve universal approval in the United States, but this they felt, was mainly because the tactics of the Blackshirts resembled too closely the tactics of Garibaldi at the time of the unification. The Messenger felt as well that one good reason for hope was found in the fact that the change in government would probably mean a new Parliament and new laws.[71]

A week later, the Messenger took a more hesitant look at the current affairs in Italy. They saw the new Fascist government as seemingly beneficial, not only in Italy, but as an innovation on the scene of European diplomacy.

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[70] "We Echo," The Monitor, January 31, 1931.

[71] "Italy's New Leaders," The CAtholic Messenger, November 23, 1922.

However, they were hesitant about Fascism because they were not sure about its true nature. The editors asked how the Fascist were to be distinguished from Communists, Socialists, or Bolshevics. Still, they were impressed with the successes of the Fascists:

> We would dislike to tie permanently to Mussolini, but any man who will break through the red tape and settled policies of the great powers of Europe and call them down and get new life and action into them is, so long as he "stays with it," a world benefactor.[72]

In conclusion to this chapter, it would be well to sum up the evidence thus far presented. Generally speaking, the CAtholic press reaction can be divided into two categories: those treating Fascism as a political phenomenon, and those who saw it merely in the narrow context of CAtholic Church affairs in Italy. To the first group belongs the Catholic World, for its editors, in most cases, looked at the rise of Fascism in the light of political philosophy and therefore almost throughout this period, vacillated between hesitancy and outright opposition. America and Commonweal, however, measured the Fascists with regard to their attitudes toward the Roman Catholic Church. They noted the anti-Communism and anti-Masonic tendencies of the Mussolini group, which of course were highly acceptable to a Catholic. Further, they noted as well the pro-Catholic laws which were instituted shortly after the March on Rome, again giving reason for favoritism toward the Fascist government. It was the Catholic World which first noted the possible overstress on the part of Fascists on nationalism. This "statolatry" was seen as a dangerous thing in the light of individual freedom, but even more so with regard to the freedom of the Church itself. The other magazines began during this period to recognize the danger also, although for the most part, their fears were expressed in the light of the danger that could exist for the CAtholic Church.

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[72] "The Fascisti as Diplomats," The CAtholic Messenger, November 30, 1922.

The diocesan press, as has been noted, was less likely to study the problem at all, at most giving a mere recitation of the events in Rome. The exceptions were the Chicago New World, which gave the most developed and complete study to the subject, the San Francisco Monitor, and the Davenport Catholic Messenger, both of which gave favorable, if brief, accountings of the political change in Italy.

As we approach 1929, therefore, it is well to recall that at this time the Catholics of the United States were still in a state of mentality which was typified by an overwhelming interest for things Catholic and that is all. They were less inclined to involve themselves in the political controversies of the day, and saw any governmental action almost totally in the light of the benefits or dangers to the advancement of the Church itself. A man like Mussolini was praised for his restoration of the crucifix to the classroom and his opposition to birth control (even though his practical reasoning of providing more people for the nation was different from the Catholic opposition on moral grounds.)

The nationalism which the FAscists sought to inculcate into the people of Italy was likewise a favorable factor which CAtholics in America could approve. This period was a time when Catholics in general were seeking to prove their unequivocal allegiance to the United States. (Witness the facts of the 1928 presidential campaign.) Therefore, American Catholics would approve of the Italian government's encouraging their people to be proud of their nation, more as Americans sought to prove that they were proud of and supported in all matters the United States. This favoritism toward nationalism was coupled, in America, with a distinct isolationism on the part of CAtholics. It was most clearly evident in American Catholics' opposition to United States membership in the League of Nations. Selig Adeer, in studying pre-World War II isolationist tendencies in America saw that American Catholics, especially Irish-Americans, were pre-Pearl Harbor isolationists.[73] He further notes the acceptance which Father Coughlin (who will be treated in detail in a later chapter) encountered among American CAtholics, especially in his isolationist, anti-English, and anti-Semitic speeches.[74]

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[73] Selig Adeer, The Isolationist Impulse (NEw York: Abelard-Schuman, 1957), p. 292.

To conclude the period leading up to the Lateran Treaties, we can say that American Catholics did react to Mussolini, but for the most part, while seeking to react as Americans, they most overwhelmingly reacted as CAtholics.

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[74] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER III

THE ROMAN QUESTION AND CATHOLIC ACTION: CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN ITALY AT HIGH AND LOW TIDE

Pope Benedict Xv did not live to see the Fascists take over the government of Italy, but he observed the Italian political scene in the post-World War time when various solutions were being formulated to the many problems of the nation. Though he died some months before the March on Rome (January 22, 1922), Benedict witnessed the rise of the Fascists and the following which they drew, as well as that of Sturzo's Popular Party, in which he allowed active participation to Catholics by removing past prohibitions against political activity.

At the time of the Pope's death, Mussolini noted that the Papacy was the largest and oldest empire in the world, and that it contained the greatest spiritual power. He is said to have felt at this time that anticlericalism was on the way out, that the hope for another world still influenced freatly the thoughts of men. It was likewise reported that during the conclave following the death of Benedict, Mussolini joined the crowd in Saint Peter's square, watching for the white smoke that would signify a new Pope had been elected, and that the accession to the Papacy of Achille Ratti brought from Il Duce the comment that there might well be hope for settlement or at least improvement in Italian-Vatican relations.[1]

The new Pope, who would take the name Pius XI, and the Fascist leader who would assume national control just eight months later, were no strangers to each other. Achille Ratti was Archbishop of Milan at the time when the Fascists began to organize and grow in that city. At the time of great industrial strife in Milan, Archbishop Ratti attempted to mediate and bring peace, and in this capacity, he came into contact with Mussolini and the FAscists for the first time. It seems that in Milan, Archbishop Ratti and the Fascist leader worked well together, for the _Catholic Historical REview_, in chronicling the life of the new Pope, mentions that Mussolini and that city's Archbishop were a complement to one another in the affairs of the day, and that the Fascist-controlled newspaper, _Giornale d'Italia_, gave valuable support to the Archbishop and his programs. At the same time, it issaid that Ratti's influence kept the Fascisti from turning against the monarchy, and thus aided in keeping their allegiance to the House of Savoy.[2]

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[1] Ivone Kirkpatrick, _Mussolini: A Study in Power_ (New York: Hawthron, 1964), p. 121.

[2] "Pius XI," _Catholic Historical Review_, II (New Series) (April, 1922), 77-84.

A recent treatment of the period by H. Stuart Hughes classifies Pius XI as not pro-Fascist, but truly convinced of the merits of the new order once it came to power. While he disliked political CAtholicism, and preferred non-partisan lay organizations under the guidance of the bishops, the new Pope had a sympathetic understanding for Mussolini and his men, " . . . even at the expense of jettisoning the new Catholic party, the Popolari."[3]

One of the perennial topics of conversation with the advent of a new civil government in Italy or the coronation of a new Pope, was the possibility of settlement of the "Roman Question." On September 20, 1870, the temporal power of the Papacy ahd ended with the occupation of Rome by the armies pledged to Italian unification. The Papal States were no more, and the city of Rome as well was in the hands of the Italian patriots. From that date, the Pope had retained a posture of living protest to the way in which his domains had been taken, Pius IX and all the Popes since that time had chosen to remain in self-imposed imprisonment in the Vatican palace. The years, it is true, had dulled the original pain and the problem became less urgent after the death of Pio Nono, but the question had never been settled, no remuneration had been made to the Holy See for the territory taken, no mutually recognized legal measure had ever been made clear as to the rights of the papacy, nor had the land on which the Pope lived been considered his own, but merely a grant from the nation.[4]

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[3] H. Stuart Hughes, The United States and Italy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 94.

In 1919, a solution was suggested, with Monsignor Francis G. Kelley of the Extension Society of America, later Bishop of Tulsa-Oklahoma City, taking a leading role. Kelley set up a meeting between the Vatican and the Italian government, but that plan failed when the ruling party at that time fell from power.[5]

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[4] Luigi Villari, *Italian Foreign Policy Under Mussolini* (New York: The Devin Adair Company, 1956), p. 60.

[5] Francis Gilbert Kelley, *The Bishop Jots It Down* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939), pp. 267-74. See also: Vittorio E. Orlando, "The First Agreement Between Italy and the Holy See," *Saturday Evening Post*, CCI, #45 (may 4, 1929), 12-13 and 206. While in Paris in 1919, Monsignor Kelley met the Marquis Brambilla, counsellor to the Italian delegation in Paris. As they discussed the possibility of a settlement to the Roman Question, Brambilla arranged a meeting between the American Monsignor and the Italian consul. Kelley then went to Rome and reported the events to Monsignor Bonaventura Cerretti of the Congregation of Extraordinary Affairs. Both reported to Cardinal Gasparri, who took them to Pope Benedict XV. Kelley accompanied Cerretti to Rome, and introduced him to the consul, Vittorio E. Orlando, who continued with Ceretti the discussion of the possibility of a settlement in which the Vatican would be recognized as owning a certain amount of land as its own. The talks were quite productive, and there seemed to be hope for success, but in June of 1919, Orlando returned to Rome, only to find that because of the less than satisfactory settlement of the Peace Treaty in Paris, his government had fallen from power. Therefore, for the present, a settlement was out of the question. A bit of groundwork, therefore, was laid for the 1929 settlement, with the help of an American monsignor.

In 1926, a bill was introduced into the Italian Chamber of Deputies which would reform the existing ecclesiastical legislation. Its appearance led L. J. S. Wood to comment in Commonweal that such a measure would go a long way toward restoring the rights lost by the Holy See in 1870, if not the territory and temporal power. He saw in such an act the dawn of a possible solution to the Roman Question, since it seemed that there was no longer great hostility existing between the Holy See and Italy. He saw two main problems which would have to be faced, should a series of negotiations be undertaken--Italy would not want to give up any of its land which was hers to another sovereign, although such a donation to a spiritual sovereign might be more palatable. Further, the question would have to center around the amount of land which would belong to the Holy See. Wood saw at least good dispositions on the part of the Fascist government, but noted the truism that "The Vatican is never in a hurry."[6]

A few days later, America published, in its "Chronicle" section, the observation that the Facist reforms in Italy "Have won consistent approval of the Holy Father . . .," an approval which would continue as long as there would be no interference with ecclesiastical authority. Such a situation was felt to open the possibility of a concordat between

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[6] L. J. S. Wood, "Mussolini and the Vatican," Commonweal, III (March 31, 1926), 569-70.

Italy and the Holy See. This could not hope to be a reality, however, until the juridical situation of the Holy See in Italy was solved. However, good intentions were seen on both sides, and therefore the journal thought there was hope for the future.[7]

Actually, the proposed reform of ecclesiastical legislation was initiated at the end of 1925. The Minister of Justice, Alfredo Rocca, appointed a commission to study the possibility of conforming legislation more to the wishes of the clergy. The commission, with Vatican approval, included three ecclesiastics. However, on February 18, 1926, Pius XI indicated that no success could be expected until the Roman Question had been settled. By some it was considered an invitation, and the work of the commission was later suspended while, secretly, negotiations were begun for meetings on a solution to the major problems of the Roman Question.[8]

In January of 1926, Henry P. Fletcher reported to the Department of State in Washington that the proposed ecclesiastical reform legislation would be beneficial. He noted the provisions: the hierarchy, religious, and churches would be given full government recognition, an exchange of views would replace the government approval of ecclesiastical appointments and the inspection of bulls. Also, he noted the tax exemption which would be given to religious, pensions for aged and infirm clergy, and restoration of old churches taken over by the government. However, Fletcher felt that the Vatican would prefer such provisions to be made in a concordat with the Fascist government rather than on a unilateral basis. He saw, in this line, some hope, saying that Mussolini, " . . . when he said that he intended in five years to make Rome the most important city in Italy, had in mind a settlement of the Roman Question." Therefore a concordat in which the Vatican received some land of its own was a distinct possibility.[9]

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[7] "The Vatican and Mussolini," America, XXXIV (April 3, 1926), 582.

[8] Kirkpatrick, pp. 259-60.

On August 5, 1926, Professor Emilio Barone suggested initial negotiations toward this end. Mussolini concurred in a private message to the Vatican on October 4, 1926. The Vatican replied favorably on the twenty-fourth, and on December 31, 1926, Barone and Cardinal Pietro Gasparri entered the secret, official discussion.[10]

Fletcher did not see much hope for a settlement, although he was evidently not aware of the discussions going on. On October 4, 1927, he noted the Fascist policy toward the Vatican, but felt that formal reconciliation was unlikely. This lack of hope he ascribed to the too-similar nature of the Fascist Party and the Roman Catholic Church, each of whom would want to be supreme over the other.[11]

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[9] USDS, Fletcher to State, Rome, January 18, 1926 (865.404/9). (Dispatch)

[10] Villari, pp. 61-62.

Less than a year before the final agreement, America took a look at the Italian scene and again saw advances under the Fascist regime. The editors compared the Fascist policy to what in Theodore Roosevelt's time had been called "government by the big stick." They felt that in his heart, Mussolini knew that the Church would never relinquish her rights in Italy, particularly the right to the religious, moral, and mental training of the young. Therefore, they doubted he would risk all he had won on a challenge to Vatican power. The editors felt that the situation could only be solved by " . . . a Concordat, implicit or formal."[12]

Meanwhile, the secret negotiations were taking place between representatives of the Vatican and those of the government of Italy. On February 11, 1929, it was announced to the world that a three-part agreement had been made which would settle the Roman Question, indemnify the Holy See for lost lands, and, by concordat, specify the rights of each.

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[11] USDS, Fletcher to State, Rome, January 18, 1926. (Dispatch).

[12] "Fascism and the Vatican," America, XXXIX (April 28, 1929), 53-54.

The first part of the agreement was the Lateran Treaty, by which the Roman Question was finally and irrevocably settled and hence eliminated. The Catholic religion was declared the religion of the Italian nation. The City of the Vatican was declared a sovereign state, with the Holy See holding sole jurisdiction over it. This sovereignty extended not only to internal matters, but included international affairs as well--The Vatican State was a full-fledged body on the international scene. For this reason, legations to the Holy See were recognized as having full diplomatic rights, and the territory itself was to be considered neutral and inviolable. In the religious sphere, the person of the Holy Father was to be considered sacred, and no interference was to be allowed by the Italian government in the central, curial bodies of the Church.[13]

The second part of the agreement dealt with indemnification for lost lands. The Holy See was to be paid 750,000,000 lire in cash, and one billion lire in bonds in compensation for the loss of the Papal States which had been taken over at the time of the unification of Italy.[14]

The final part of the agreement was the Vatican-Italian Concordat. Its provisions included the assurance of free exercise of spiritual power for the Holy See.

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[13] Sidney Z. Ehler and John B. Morall, Church and State through the Centuries (Westminster: Newman, 1954), pp. 382-407.

[14] Villari, p. 62.

Certain privileges were granted to clerics: they were excused from being called to jury duty, and they were given an exemption from the military draft. In time of mobilization of the armed forces, priests would serve solely as chaplains. The Holy See was likewise assured of free communication with the bishops. Not only this, but the Vatican was guaranteed the freedom to appoint all bishops in Italy, with only the provision that the government be made aware of the candidates to assure that no political reason hinder the bishop-elect from functioning. The bishops of Italy, in turn, were to swear their fealty to the Italian State. In line with the provision of the Treaty that the CAtholic religion would be the sole religion of the State, religion was to be taught in the elementary and high schools of the nation, and the canonical effects of marriage were recognized in the civil order. The so-called "Catholic Action" groups were officially sanctioned by the FAscist government, as long as they were removed from politics.[15]

An interesting communique was sent from the American embassy in Rome ten days after the settlement was announced. Henry P. Fletcher reported the event to the Department of State, mentioning that the Fascist Grand Council would be first to vote its approval of the Treaty and Concordat. Fletcher said that he agreed with the Paris newspaper Temps, which saw in the agreement a wise move by Mussolini, whereby his own interests could best be served through settlement of the Roman Question. Fletcher felt the Roman Question was permanently settled, but did not hold much hope for the guarantees of the Concordat, which could be abrogated at any time by the government, especially if there be a change in the government. For this reason, Fletcher felt that the Holy See, particularly Pius XI, was vitally interested in keeping Fascism in power. This, of course, would serve the wishes of Mussolini as well, because he was hereby able to have constant power and support of his government from the leaders of a Church whose membership was in a majority in the nation.[16]

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[15] "Vatican-Italian Concordat," in Ehler-Morall, *Ibid*.

After the Grand Council of the Fascist governmand had approved the Treaties, debate on them was opened in the Chamber of Deputies, and it was soon clear to Mussolini that he would face some noticeable opposition not only in this matter but in others as well, should he continue to show seeming favoritism to the Catholic Church in Italy. Therefore, on May 13, 1929, Il Duce addressed the Chamber in a decidedly anticlerical speech, in which he reassured them that even after passage of the agreements, the Catholic Church in Italy was neither sovereign nor free, for it was still subject to Italian law and the allegiance demanded by the

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[16] USDS, Fletcher to State, Rome. February 21, 1929 (865.00F/76). (Dispatch)

Concordat. He claimed that in reality, Italy had given nothing away, that the temporal power was far from resurrected, in fact it was buried forever. Naturally, Pius XI was incensed by this speech, and let his feelings be known in protest. AS a result, Mussolini made a more conciliatory speech in the Senate, which however really altered nothing. Privately, Mussolini assured the Pope that the speech in the Chamber of Deputies was given merely to placate and receive support from anticlericals who might otherwise oppose the Pacts.[17]

The agreements were ratified on June 7, 1929, and it seems that neither side actually "won" a victory. Mussolini was still unable to make the Pope the political vassal of the Italian State, and the Holy Father would still need to work hard to secure the guarantees provided by the Treaties. Cardinal Pizzardo is quoted as saying that advantages were to be found on both sides.[18]

The Lateran Treaties formed, by no means, an everlasting peace and harmony between Church and State in Italy. This was due to the character of Mussolini and his government, who failed to comprehend the nature and outlook of Church and Papacy. Mussolini expected that in return for the settlement of the Roman Question, the Vatican would unhesitantly support the FAscist government and its policies at home and abroad. Mussolini failed to see the universal character of the Catholic Church, and thought it to be mainly Italian, because of his extreme nationalistic bias.[19] During the negotiations and the signing of the agreements, it is important to remember, as well as during the subsequent strained relations which occurred, " . . . a typically Italian desire to find a 'combinazione' which would permit a practical working arrangement without sacrifice of principle."[20]

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[17] Kirkpatrick, p. 268.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 270.

Catholics in America Examine the Settlement

Wilfrid Parsons, S.J., the distinguished editor of America magazine, wrote a book shortly after the settlement in Rome, in which the Lateran Pacts were often quoted. Parsons begins his writing with congratulations to the Pope for bringing religious peace with honor to Italy. But, he says, both sides are to be acclaimed: "Honor due . . . most of all to Signor Mussolini for his determination . . . and to Pope Pius XI for the striking spirit of conciliation . . ."[21] He mentions that the main reason behind the eventual settlement of the problem can be foudd inthe fact that Mussolini "firmly held" the Catholic opinion that religion is a prime factor in the moral education of people. Therefore, he sought to give religion in Italy a privileged place, but the Pope, while certainly willing to accept this, wanted first a settlement of the Roman Question, so that religion in all its facets would be able to take its rightful place in the nation.[22] As a matter of fact, Parsons saw the need for settlement of the Roman Question from the very state of the Italian nation itself. He considered Italy as " . . . a land . . . living in the state of sin. It had perpetrated a robbery for which it had never made restitution."[23] Therefore, in a new regime pledged to law and order, justice demanded that old accounts be settled.

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[20] *Ibid*., p. 270.

[21] Wilfrid Parsons, *The Pope and Italy* (New York: The American Press, 1929), p. 1.

John Hearley summarizes the reaction that took place in America as a result of the signing of the Lateran Treaties. He saw praise in the press, but little preaching from Catholic pupilts on the subject, a fact which he ascribes to a downplaying of the subject by the American hierarchy: "It is not improbable that the average American bishop prudently instructed his clerical subordinates to 'lay off' the essentials of the subject."[24]

Hearley notes, however, a United Press dispatch of February 21, 1929, in which Pope Pius XI acknowledged happily the telegrams from many Americans expressing joy and congratulations at the Treaty and Concordat. Especially noted are the telegrams received from Patrick Cardinal Hayes of New YOrk, Bishop Joseph Schrembs of Cleveland, and Bishop William Hickey of Providence.[25] The aforementioned Cardinal Archbishop of New York wrote a pastoral shortly after the reconciliation, in which he expressed joy at the recognition given to the Holy See of its "God-given independence."[26] In New York, the Cardinal scheduled a special Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Patrick's Cathedral, at which the Reverend John A. McGlorey, S.J., preached. While noting the advantages to the Church brought about by the settlement of the Roman Question, Father McGlorey took the opportunity to allay fears among Americans who thought that Catholics had entered upon a new era of political activity. He made it clear that the Church should not meddle in political affairs, and also describer the present situation, as it stood even after the Treaties--that if the Pope, as a sovereign, should, unthinkingly, declare war on America, American Catholics would oppose him. He also put forth the statement that Papal infallibility actually was limited to a very narrow span of influence.[27]

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[24] John Hearley, *Pope or Mussolini* (New York: Macauly Company, 1929), pp. 32-33. (No evidence has been found to document this contention.)

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[25] Ibid., p. 74.

[26] Ibid., pp. 158-59. (This pastoral was not published in the Archdiocesan newspaper.)

[27] Ibid., p. 167.

Again summing up American reaction, Hearley felt that there was a mixed feeling toward the settlement, fear of reprisals in America for CAtholic advantages in Italy, as well as fear of subservience of the Church to the FAscist government. Not only this, but there was also the danger voiced that if the Fascist regime should fall, the Church would either suffer greatly because of its close connection with that government, or else the Holy Father would have to assume the temporal power in its fullness once again, thereby creating a new Holy Roman Empire.[28]

The Catholic periodicals in America gave the Roman settlement a good deal of space, since it was noteworthy to the Church at large. The Catholic World published an article by Bishop Thomas Shahan, Rector of the Catholic University of America, five months after the signing of the Pacts, in which the bishop hailed the many pro-religious actions taken by Mussolini as a chief source of achieving good will and the admiration of many Catholic citizens in America. He noted the suppression of the Freemasons, the recognition of the University of Milan, the restoration of the crucifix to the classroom, and the general friendly attitude in which Il Duce had shown himself so conciliatory. Although Shahan noted disappointment that the whole city of Rome, so long the property and care of the Popes, was to pass out of their hands forever, he hailed the Lateran Treaties, for at last "Caesar has divided his rule with Jove."[29]

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[28] Ibid., p. 198.

The N.C.W.C. Bulletin for March of 1929 carried an article on the subject of the recent settlement. The author noted the necessity of the Popes' keeping some temporal power, a power they could not completely relinquish for it was needed for ecclesiastical independence--they needed a section of land independent of any government. Also, a Vatican State was needed for worldwide recognition of the political temporal entity which was the Holy See, whereby the nations of the world could acknowledge its sovereign independence. The Pope was the final judge in the matter, and he decided to keep just enough land to have a minimal amount of territorial possessions, so that he could be recognized and respected as an independent sovereign. Since these were the necessary objectives of the Church, the agreement between the Vatican and the Fascist government was to be praised, for it granted all that was necessary to carry out the basic needs of independence and sovereignty.[30]

Carlton J. H. Hayes wrote two articles in Commonweal on the Lateran Settlement. He noted the weakness of the

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[29] Thomas Shahan, "Lateran Treaty and Italian Concordat," Catholic World, CXXXIX (July, 1929), 385-395.

[30] Hubert L. Motry, "Principals of Papal Sovereignty Recognized," N.C.W.C. Bulletin.

Law of Guarantees of May 13, 1871, mainly because it was unilaterally enacted by Parliament, and therefore could be amended or revoked by another parliament. Mussolini was hailed as the first Italian statesman who dared attack the Roman Question, and although there was fear in some quarters that the end result would be the making of Canon Law to be the law of the land in Italy, these fears were allayed. The results, as Hayes saw them, were many and beneficial. Italy had now completed her unification, and her citizens would no longer feel a divided loyalty between the Vatican and the Quirinal. The Pope was seen as still not dependent on Fascism, and it was believed that the Papal City-State would not enter the field of international relations to the extent of joining the League of Nations.[31]

An article in the same magazine, after almost a year had passed in which the agreement and its results might be studied, was not quite so hopeful. Certain subsequent events, especially the foreshadowings of the future Catholic Action crisis, made it clear that the Church and Fascism were not to be identified just because of the treaties. AS a matter of fact, despite the Pacts, divisions and dissensions were inevitable, mainly because of the anticlerical attitude within the government. However, there was still hope that the Pope and Victor Emmanuel (Mussolini is not mentioned here!) would be able to achieve agreement that would assure the recognition of the rights guaranteed.[32]

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[31] Carlton J. H. Hayes, "Italy and the Vatican Agree," Commonweal, IX (January 15, 1930), 356-58.

An article in a similar vein appeared in Commonweal two weeks later. Disappointment at the results of the agreement was the main feature, but the author saw this primarily as the result of too high hopes expressed at the time of the signing. To some, the millenium had arrived on that day in February, 1929. For Italy, it was suggested that the main reason for subsequent difficulties could be found in the fact that while Mussolini was agreeable to the Church, he was far ahead of the anticlericals of his party. Within the country, it was felt that the Lateran accord had developed a deepening of nationalism among the Italian people, but that even this might not be a good thing, for it could grow into excesses.[33]

The monthly Truth, published by the International Catholic Truth Society of America, Raleigh, North Carolina, carried an article on the Lateran agreements shortly after the details of them were made public. In April, 1929, the settlement was hailed particularly because, through it, the independence of the Pope was acknowledged. This, to the author, was the main issue at stake in Church-State matters in Italy. There was, however, a fear of the principles of Fascism: "Fascism has much in it that is evil and CAtholics while giving it credit for any good it may do, must carefully avoid condoning principles or actions that are indefensible."[34]

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[32] Umberto Guggleri, "After the Lateran Accord," Commonweal XI (January 15, 1930), 300-02.

[33] Harvey Wickham, "The Cross and the Eagle," Commonweal XI (January 29, 1930), 356-58.

The following month, the same journal hailed the treaty again, this time calling it an act of faith on the part of the Vatican in the pledged word of a great nation. Also, value is seen in the fact that Church-State relations are so arranged that the Holy See will be able to speak freely in the realm in which it is most competent, that of religious and moral questions. The treaty, then, was considered a fine example of the Church entering into the modern world while at the same time keeping its supernatural character:

> Christ's kingdom on earth is not of this earth earthy. [Pius XI] has thrown right away all those guarantees of an earthly order which had their proper place in a state of society now passed away, but which His Holiness deems inappropriate in the circumstances of the modern world.[35]

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[34] C. D., "The Settlement of the Roman Question," Truth XXXIII (May, 1929), 15-16.

[35] "The Treaty of the Lateran" Truth, XXXIII (May, 1929), 14-15.

In August of that same year, Truth carried another article which indicated strong support for the Treaties, and also for the Fascist regime. Italy was seen as a country resolved to remain Catholic, recognizing an obligation in conscience to serve the center of Christianity found within its borders. Mussolini was hailed as a " . . . man of common sense and as a realist, as a statesman, a patriot and a Catholic."[36]

An article in Thought, the Fordham University publication, brought to readers a study of the Roman Question settlement in the light of developing understanding of the relation between Church and State. The author, Millar, considered the Middle Ages as example of identification to the point where the state was put underground, or at least out of the picture. The later periods of history saw the development of the liberal state, which sought to reverse the process and subject the Church to its own legal principles. When the Church denied such an order, the liberal state reacted with anticlericalism. Slowly, a theory developed into practice by which success in Church-State matters was seen to be possible only on the level of personal consciousness. This was recognized by Pius XI, who saw that the Church would only be able to function successfully if the consciousness of the people in the State would grant and maintain guarantees. Therefore, the Lateran Treaties also could mean a new era in Church-State agreement, " . . . the beginning of many future blessings to Christendom and to the world."[37]

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[36] H. C. E. Zacharias, "The Significance of the Lateran Treaty," Truth, XXXIII (August, 1929), 16-18.

While the Catholic World praised the settlement, the editors felt that they could not consider it anything more than a grant in law--that is, they did not see as coming from it a complete settlement to Church-State problems in Italy. They felt that Mussolini, in his extreme nationalistic utterances which claimed the Church was born in Palestine, but only became Catholic in Rome, betrayed feelings that would continue to cause difficulties for the Holy See. At the same time, the Pope and his Secretary of State were praised for the forthright manner in which they approached the agreement--not as politicians ready to concede principles, but as fearless champions of truth and justice. Therefore, it was noted that Pius had written to Cardinal Gasparri just forty-eight hours before the agreement had been finalized, accusing Il Duce of heretical expressions and contesting his principles of family rights and education.[38]

An article in the CAtholic Historical Review in April, 1930, written by Philip Bernardini, nephew of Cardinal Gasparri, and professor of Canon Law at the CAtholic

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[37] Moorhouse I. X. Millar, "The Meaning of the Roman Settlement," Thought, IV (June, 1929), 16-18.

[38] "Once Again the Pope No Politician," CAtholic World CXXIX (July, 1929), 483-85.

University of America, hailed the Concordat and Treaty as a "Providential collaboration of the Church and the Italian State." While some felt that the Vatican had made too many concessions in order to achieve the results of the Pacts, the author did not agree, for he felt that the concessions were minimal, compared to the greatest of goods which would come from the signing, namely that the Vatican, with territory and subjects, was an entity now in international law. There was, however, one great problem which was foreseen by the author, namely that since FAscism had an exaggerated fear of opposition, although the agreement recognized and protected the "Azione Cattolica Italiana," this organization, as a haven for former Popolari, was in great danger.[39] This caveat will soon be seen to have been well founded.

The Jesuit review, America, as we have seen has covered certain parts of the Fascist years very thoroughly. However, at the time of the Lateran accord, very little was said about the settlement, other than the facts of the case. The "Chronicle" section of the magazine was the only part used to record the event, and even here, little more was said than the actual facts of the matter. For example, the June 22, 1922 issue mentioned the ratification of the agreements in final form, which occurred on June 7. The matter was studied no further. One of the few instances of real comment is found in a small section of the "Chronicle" for December 14, 1929. At this time, it was noted that Pius XI had protested the interference experienced by members of the Catholic press in Italy in regard to reporting in full on the settlement of the Roman Question. At this time, it was noted that civil authorities of the Italian government denied an official censorship of the press coverage of the event.[40]

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[39] Philip Bernardini, "The Lateran Concordat with Italy," Catholic Historical Review, XVI (April, 1930), 19-27.

Meanwhile, the diocesan press had very little to say in reaction to the signing of the treaties. GEnerally, the editors of the various newspapers consulted were content to provide an explanation of the provisions of the treaties, with a general attitude of approval for the outcome. For example, The Pilot, organ of the Archdiocese of Boston, limited itself to rather general statements of approval in the light of the good will that would accrue to the Church, the Pope, and Catholic Italy because of the agreement which had been reached. Many diocesan newspapers favored an historical approach, in which the history of the Papal States and the Roman Question in particular were examined, and the Treaties considered approvingly, with an explanation of what, in practice, they would effect. The Catholic News, newspaper of the Archdiocese of New York, carried a typical series of articles in the spring of 1929. They were written by James J. Walsh, M.D., Ph.D., and were concerned with the background, history, and legal effects of the settlement of the Roman Question.

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[40] "Catholic Press," America, XLI (December 14, 1929), 220.

In San Francisco, The Monitor gave a typical response to the events in Italy which culminated in the signing of the Concordat. The editors noted that the territory given to the Holy See was not extensive, but that the principle involved was more important: "The thing that really mattered was that the Italian government admitted that neither the government of Italy nor any other government has any sovereignty over the Pope."[41]

In Chicago, the New World was a bit more voluble in its response to the settlement of the Roman Question. As early as 1927, the editors had called for such an agreement, since the independence of the Holy See was necessary for the welfare of the Church on a universal plane. The editors felt hopeful that the time for such an agreement was right, and that the silent demands of the Prisoner of the Vatican for freedom might well be met: "In the demand made by the papacy, there is still a studied graciousness toward the present Italian government." However, it was felt that the FAscists would have to take the first steps, because they were the reigning powers, and the situation with the Vatican was caused by the Italian government. Even though it might have been another government which had brought about the troubles of 1870, still, only Italy could remedy what Italy had done.[42]

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[41] "Principles of Concessions Important," The Monitor, February 16, 1929.

The immediate reaction by the editors of the New World to the signing of the Lateran Treaties was expressed in an editorial written for the February 15, 1929 issue. The opinion was expressed that the major benefit of the settlement would come to the world at large--that the Pope was now independent of Italian control, however much influence it had been in the past. Therefore, he would be recognized as free and universal in his concern for the problems of the world. It was noted that the predecessor of Pius XI, Benedict XV, was able to serve as a peacemaker, consulted by all sides, and that more so now would the papacy be seen by the world as a source of impartial opinion on world issues.[43] Two weeks later, the same paper again showed its satisfaction with the settlement, and toward the Italian Fascist government. The New World returned to the contention that Catholicism and Italy could never really be separated, and that the Mussolini government acknowledged this. The editors remarked that the Fascist government, under Mussolini, ruled Italy: " . . . with such a majority in his favor as cannot be duplicated in any other country." Along with this power and acceptance, the Fascists coupled a desire to cooperate, it seemed, with the CAtholic Church in Italy. Therefore, the editors applauded the Pope's policies, realizing that a government which wishes to cooperate with the Church has to be aided.[44] If the intent of the Fascist government, in settling the Roman Question, had been to achieve CAtholic support not only in Italy, but in the rest of the world as well, they certainly would have considered themselves successful in Chicago.

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[42] "A Desired Solution," The New World, November 4, 1927.

[43] "Settlement," The New World, February 15, 1929.

Shortly thereafter, in reacting to some secular oppostion voiced in America to the Lateran Treaties in particular, and the Fascist government in general, The New World noted that Mussolini was popular--that his government had the approval and support of the Italian people. This approval it was felt, was something due to Il Duce:

> Whether or not the American press approves of Mussolini, he stands forth as a conspicious success. He has led his people out of the slough of inefficiency, petty politics, graft and ineptitude. For such a boon the shadow of democracy might well be swapped.[45]

By the end of 1929, the New World was even more ready to shower approval on the Fascists. When Victor Emmanuel III and Pius XI met formally, signifying the extent to which the agreement had gone, the editors were even more outspoken in their praise of Il Duce. They felt that " . . . modern Italy is on its way to great accomplishments." This was primarily because of Mussolini, who was described as "wise and farseeing." Probably the most impressive factor in judging Mussolini was the amount of support he had among his countrymen. Italy was unified to an almost miraculous degree, the people being almost ninety-five per cent in favor of the Premier. It was felt that the benefits recently received by the Church, particularly the settlement of the Roman Question, could not have been effected were it not for the revolution of the Black Shirts.[46] The editors do not explain how they arrived at the figure of ninety-five per cent approval of the Fascists in Italy; it is obvious, however, that they felt that one of the main reasons for support of Mussolini abroad was the overwhelming support he had in his own country. Whether it was quite that high is debatable.

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[44] "A Historic Settlement," The New World, March 1, 1929.

[45] "Responsibility," The New World, March 29, 1929.

In Milwaukee, the Catholic Citizen praised the Lateran Pacts shortly after they were signed:

> We Americans have not always understood Mussolini. Soom of his acts have seemed arbitrary and egotistical. But we must certainly give him credit, not only for having put Italy on her feet and therefore in the forefront of the nations of the world, but, above all, for the part he has taken in the solving of this mooted question.[47]

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[46] "Historic Drama," The New World, December 13, 1929.

[47] "Everybody Satisfied," Catholic Citizen, February 23, 1929.

We might summarize the last pages by saying that here especially, did the Mussolini government achieve American Catholic support. If Il Duce did no other positive action, it would seem that for settlement of the Roman Question he was to be praised. During this time, there were few periodicals of Catholic America that would remember any reservations they had about him and his government. Rather, they put together the many positive things he had done for the Church, and invited support.

Catholic Action

While the solution to the Roman Question aided the image of Mussolini among American CAtholics, a confrontation two years later would impare this image.

In an article for the Catholic Historical Review in 1932, Wilfrid Parsons, S.J., described the state of affairs in Italy in regard to Church-State relations. He saw the Catholic religion in Italy as tied closely to nationalism, but also saw the presence of anti-Catholicism and Freemasonry, especially in the cities. (In the rural areas, he felt Catholics themselves were fervent but ill-instructed.) The post-war period had seen Italy in a state of governmental chaos, to the point where any true strong government was acceptable, and Benito Mussolini filled the need, with his heterogeneous crowd of malcontented and idealistic followers. Il Duce had done away with opposition parties, both political and religious, and therefore the Popular Party and the Freemasons were suppressed, although opposition from their former members remained, if only in an underground manner. Parsons felt that Church-State relations in the late 20's and early 30's centered around two key positions. Mussolini recognized that the Church was a major force for the formation of thought in Italy, and he wished to utilize this force for the best interests of the nation. Therefore, the Church was allowed to speak on social questions and influence the thinking of the nation, mainly because Mussolini, in these areas, had approached the more Catholic solutions to the questions. However, the other factor was the extreme patriotism and nationalism of the Fascisti. The Church, and particularly Church organizations, could only be tolerated and/or encouraged as it showed that it shared the patriotic feelings of the regime. If the State had confidence in a particular Catholic organization, that it was truly patriotic, then there would be no difficulty. This was especially true because of the Concordat of 1929, through which the Church had a better chance of flourishing in Italy than in any other country in Europe.[48]

One of the key problems in this area was the organization of Catholic Action groups as proposed and encouraged by Pius XI. This controversy would bring into play the elements of the Concordat, the Fascist encouragement of the Church for nationalistic reasons, but also the Fascist fear of political opposition. It returned to the problem of whether the Church or the State could expect to have control of the youth of the nation. Mussolini recognized the importance of the youth, and through control of education and Catholic Action, he would seek to continue his nationalistic policies to their furthest extent. The question would eventually resolve itself into a problem of whether the Catholic Action groups were political or religious. The fact remains that they were under the influence of former members of the Popular Party, and because of this, Mussolini feared them as dangerous to Fascist control of Italian thought and action.[49]

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[48] Wilfrid Parsons, "The Church in Contemporary Italy, 1919-1931," Catholic Historical Review, XVIII (April, 1932), 1-18.

Even before the Lateran Treaties, the control of youth organizations was controverted between the regime and the Church. In 1929, the government suppressed the Italian equivalent to the Boy Scouts, the Giovani Esploratori, in towns of less than 20,000 inhabitants. They were to be incorporated into the government-sponsored youth groups, the Balilla. It was not thought to be an attack on the Church at this time however, and since the Scouts were considered autonomous groups, the Holy Father agreed that they could choose whether or not to incorporate into the Balilla. However, Pius XI made it very clear that the Catholic Action groups in Italy were not to be tampered with, especially because their purpose was solely religious.[50] However, a year later, the remaining units of the Scouts were accused by some extreme Fascists of being engaged in political activity, although some high Fascist leaders praised them. Therefore, the Pope reiterated that it was not the State which had primary control over the education and upbringing of children, but it was rather the right of the family. (This was considered by America to be an indication of a setback in possible advances towards a solution to the Roman Question in April of 1928).[51]

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[49] Hughes, p. 98.

The American Embassy in Rome reported to the Department of State in September, 1929, that the recently concluded settlement of the Roman Question was returned to a case of strained relations because of the growing controversy over the nature and control of Catholic Action in Italy. Ambassador Alexander Kirk noted a speech by Pius XI in which the patriotism of the members of Catholic Action was defended, a fact denied by the Italian press. Kirk stated that Pius likened the members to martyrs because of the difficulties facing them, and this seemed to be substantiated by the fact that not only were they under surveillance, but some had already been deported.[52]

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[50] "Catholic Scouts Suppressed," America, XXVI (February 5, 1927), 394.

[51] "Osservatore on the Boy Scouts," America, XXXIX (April 14, 1928), 14.

In 1931, the question came to a head. In March of that year, a concerted attack began against Catholic Action. In April, Giovanni Gioviati, Secretary of the Fascist party, made a strong anti-Catholic Action speech in Milan, which Pius XI protested in an open letter to the Archbishop of Milan. At the end of May, official party policy dictated an attack on CAtholic Action over a wide area. Police were directed to dissolve the groups on May 30, and the Vatican countered on the following day by suspending the mission of the Cardinal legate to the seventh centenary of the death of Saint Anthony, an event which had been planned to increase nationalistic feeling and identification of purpose between Church and State. The first day of June, 1931, again in the light of the police action, the Pope expressed grief at action of the government and ordered that the public Corpus Christi processions be cancelled. Still, Mussolini was uncompromising in his opposition to the groups on the grounds of political opposition to the government discovered in CAtholic Action.[53]

While most American Catholic magazines waited to see the response of the Holy See to the government's actions,

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[52] USDS, Alexander Kirk to State, Rome, September 19, 1929 (865.00F/89). (Dispatch)

[53] Kirkpatrick, pp. 281-83.

Commonweal commented at this time that the acts of the government were "violent and tyrannical." It was felt by the editors that the clash was inevitable because Mussolini had decreed absolute state authority. The fact that the Catholic Action groups were under the direction of the bishops meant that the FAscists, in attacking the groups, were attacking the Church itself.[54]

The answer of the Vatican was not long in coming, for the Holy Father wrote an encyclical letter on the subject, "Non abbiamo bisogno," which was dated June 29, 1931, the feast of Saints Peter and Paul. An American had a large part to play in the publication of this statement of Vatican policy on Catholic Action. On June 29, Monsignor Francis Spellman, a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston working in the Vatican Secretariat of State, was called into the private library of Pius XI. There, he was instructed that he was to carry the encyclical out of Italy, to Paris, where it would be published without Fascist interference or censorship. A plan was devised whereby the future CArdinal-Archbishop of New York was to leave Italy carrying official letters to the Apostolic Nuncio at Paris, while concealing the text of the encyclical. This was successfully accomplished and on July 4, Spellman released the encyclical to the offices of the Associated Press, United Press, International News, Havas Agency, Reuters, as well as the GErman and Polish Press agencies.[55] The publication of the Catholic Action encyclical brought instantaneous world opinion against Mussolini, and in America this was even more marked, as we shall see, no doubt partially because an American monsignor was involved in a cloak-and-dagger plot to get the encyclical out of Italy and into public view.[56]

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[54] "Caesar Challenges Peter," Commonweal, XIV (June 10, 1931), 141-42.

The encyclical itself was strong in its defense of the Catholic Action groups. Pius XI wanted it clearly understood that any sacred person, place, or thing was inviolable and that the Fascisti were perpetrating acts of violence against some of these. The intention of the groups, as explained by the hierarchy, was religious, and therefore the disbanding of the groups must be protested. The Pope saw the action of the government as a further example of the planned domination of every facet of Italian life, and suggested that it certainly seemed to be ingratitude toward the Holy See in the light of the prestige the government had gained as a result of the solution of the Roman Question. The Pope stated that it was a fundamental policy of Catholic Action that there be " . . . abstention from every political activity." Therefore, while the regime claimed its opposition was for political acts, Pius saw rather than this that the government wished to take the youth of the nation away from the Church for the exclusive advantage of the party, another example of "statolatry," " . . . a real pagan worship of the state." Even more basic was the indication that the government wished the Church to be limited solely to the worship of God, with the State taking over every other part of life, including education. Therefore, those who persecuted these groups were described as Catholic only in name and in baptism.

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[56] Ibid., p. 77. The Monsignor's role gradually became known in his native land only in later years.

While the Pope wanted it clearly understood that he was not condemning the Fascist party as such, he was speaking against those activities of the party contrary to Catholic doctrine and practice. He noted that the party had been anticlerical in a number of cases during its time in power, and one of the best examples of this was the oath taken by the FAscit youth group members. This oath indicated that the individual would take orders without discussion, and without any necessity on the part of the one giving to indicate the truth and justice involved. Therefore, the oath disregarded the rights of the Church and was unlawful, unless it contained a clause which would provide for a reservation: "Saving the laws of God and of the Church."[57]

The American periodicals commented on the Papal condemnation of Fascist opposition to Catholic Action. An article written for America a few weeks after the appearance of the encyclical continued the policy of not condemning the Fascists as such. The author saw the encyclical as a condemnation of left-wing elements in Italy, particularly atheists, Socialists, and others. These elements, it was felt, were the ones who furthered the pagan notion of the "Omnipresent State," which was particularly in evidence in the desire to control organizations, schools, and even, if possible, the government of the Church itself. Wiltbye, the author, called upon the Fascist party to repudiate those who had perpetrated the outrages.[58] The same issue of America carried an editorial in which the encyclical was described as a marvel of statesmanship. In the encyclical, it was seen that there was left open a way by which the Fascist government could retreat and still save face. By admitting the non-political character of the Catholic Action groups, the Fascist could continue the worthy cooperation of Church and State in Italy for the benefit of both. It was considered possible that the Pope would enter into discussion and concede some points, but that he would not compromise principles of welfare to religion. In was further noted that the Holy Father was very careful not to condemn the Fascist State, thereby cutting off all possible points of agreement. Rather, he had condemned the excesses of policy.[59]

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[57] Ehler and Morrall, pp. 463-484.

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[58] John Wiltbye, "Fascism and the State," America, XLII (July 18, 1931), 353-54.

The same line of argument was used in the Jesuit journal in the following issue, after it had been learned that the Fascists continued their resistance. They had ignored the Holy Father's demand for proof of political activity on the part of the Catholic Action groups, and overlooked the "way out" of the difficulty--repudiation of extremist elements in their party, thereby refusing to defend pagan ideals of government in a Catholic country.[60]

Although another month passed, America noted late in August of 1931 that no real answer had come from the Fascists. However, the author of the article carried in the August 22 issue did not give up hope of a solution, mainly because he felt that Mussolini in reality never wanted anything else but a Catholic foundation for this party and nation. The key to the problem, as seen by this author, was that Mussolini at times lapsed into a denial of Catholic principles, especially when he seemed to favor State absolutism. He felt, however, that the Fascist party and Catholicism were not incompatible, only the outrages committed were. These outrages, in fact, were at variance with the avowed principles of the Fascist revolution. Therefore, a reform was needed in the party itself, "For to rule a Catholic people by anti-Catholic statutes is to court not failure but ruin."[61] An equitable solution would aid both sides of the controversy.

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[60] "The Fascist Rejoinder," America, XLII (July 25, 1931), 365.

The July issue of *Catholic World* for 1931 continued its opposition to Fascism *in toto*. An editorial expressed no surprise at the latest example of Church-State difficulties in Italy, primarily because any dictator must sooner or later run afoul of the Pope. Mussolini was compared to Napoleon, and a similar end was predicted for Il Duce. While the Popes throughout history have desired peace and harmony, they would not stand for a subordination of the spiritual to the temporal: "Spiritual power can be independent only if the temporal power keeps its place." Few dictators have been willing to keep their place, however, and since the Fascists had been claiming their Catholicism, this dictatorship had to be doubted as to its veracity.[62]

The same magazine printed another editorial in the following month's issue, in which the Church was defended against those in America, who every time a Church-State controversy broke out, were quick to blame the Church. While both Church and State must have freedom, in Italy the Fascist concept was that the individual existed for the State. This hampered individual freedom, for religious principles demanded a social aspect to their practice, while Fascism denied such an aspect in the interest of nationalism. This was not possible, for love of neighbor was not just a matter of the individual soul. The Pope, therefore, in the Catholic Action question, was defending individual rights such as those defended in the American Declaration of Independence. Even in America, however, it was felt that the State was intruding too far into the domain of the Church.[63]

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[61] Paul L. Blakely, "The Church and the Fascist Party" *America*, XLII (August 22, 1931), 472-73.

[62] "Absit Omen," *Catholic World*, CXXXIII (July, 1931), 488-91

In Italy, the encyclical provoked the Italian government at first to attempt to divide Catholics by making them decide between Fascism and CAtholic Action, and this action of July 9, 1931, resulted in many defections from the Catholic Action ranks. However, Vatican pressure continued to the point where by August 28, the government revoked the measures and a settlement began to be nogotiated. On September 2, 1931, the agreement was announced, under which Catholic Action would be controlled by diocesan bishops, and no practices proper to the political order would be allowed. Further, no trade union functions were to be taken over by organizations of Catholic Action formed by professional people. Finally, the CAtholic Action groups were to avoid athletic endeavor and concentrate solely on religious programs. On September 30, the Fascist secretary revoked the decree of incompatibility which had been issued against the Catholic Action groups.[64]

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[63] "Church and State Once More Lock Horns," Catholic World, CXXXIII (August, 1931), 611-17.

Some have indicated that the settlement was the direct result of the fear on the part of Il Duce that the Pope would excommunicate him if his opposition continued. Also, because of the opposition to the suppression expressed throughout the world after the encyclical "Non abbiamo bisogno" had been published, foreign opinion was definitely behind the Holy See and Mussolini had nothing to gain on the international scene at this time by continuing his opposition. The settlement was actually then a compromise of diplomacy--the Pope allowed that Catholic Action groups would be organized with an eye to non-interference with Fascist groups, and Mussolini allowed their continued existence.[65]

After this settlement, Catholic World continued to examine the issues. An article in the July, 1933, issue looked at the Catholic Action controversy in the light of the Lateran Treaties:

> The advantages gained through the Lateran Treaty, however, could not possibly illude the Holy See on what to the Catholics are objectionable features in the Fascist program, and since the Vatican refuses to submit on these points it has really come out in this situation as the gainer.[66]

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[64] Kirkpatrick, pp. 282-84.

[65] Ibid., p. 284.

[66] Carmen Harder, "The Vatican and Italian Fascism," Catholic World, CXXXVII (July, 1933), 395-402.

Two years later, CAtholic World compared the possibilities open to Italian youths--membership in the Fascist party or membership in Catholic Action groups. The conclusion was obvious:

> But when action, discipline, authority and social solidarity itself are being promoted with no Christian motive, still more when they are to lead to a Godless State or to a god-State, then it is not well for Christians to join with their promoters.[67]

Hughes notes that the results of this controversy were good for the image of the Church throughout the world, but especially in America. It was seen that the Pope was defending his rights, and therefore the majority of Catholics in America and elsewhere, shared the Pope's suspicion of Fascism after 1931.[68] They were right, it would seem, for many reasons; for example in December, 1941, Mussolini turned anti-Catholic to the point that he wished to abolish the feast of Christmas as celebrated in Italy, since it was merely the birthday of a Jew whose theories were debilitating and devitalizing the nation. He prohibited newspapers from even mentioning the feast.[69]

The Catholic Action controversy attracted more attention in the diocesan press than other events of the Fascist period, particularly because it was so concerned with the inner life of the Church. While the newspapers may not have involved themselves in discussion of the political philosophy of Fascism, when it came to the practical case of a head-on encounter between the principles of the Church and the Fascist government, more of the local editors felt called upon to speak.

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[67] "Fascism," Catholic World, CXLII (November, 1936), 230-32.

[68] Hughes, p. 102.

[69] Kirkpatrick, pp. 504-05.

In Brooklyn, the editors of *The TAblet* spoke up in June of 1931, saying that the controversy stemmed from the fallacy of Fascist thought that the child belonged to the State. This was a principle based on pagan ideals, and although Mussolini had done a great deal for the Church, "A system based upon false principles must perish, for liberty will not remain forever coerced." More specifically, *The Tablet* charged that " . . . the tenets of Fascism are foreign to the teaching of Catholicism regarding liberty of conscience and democracy." In particular, the Fascists were faulted for theirrreliance upon force, since brute force could never be successful against the spiritual. Even more telling was the fact, seen as remarkably out of line, that the Italian government considered the Holy See to be a foreign state.[70]

The San Francisco *Monitor*, meanwhile, based its defense of the Catholic Action groups solely on the spiritual nature of the groups, which should have set them above the domain of temporal governments:

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[70] "Fascist Blunders," *The Tablet*, June 27, 1931.

> Our Archbishop has applauded the sturdy stand made by the Holy Father against the encroachments of Fascism. His Excellency shows the fundamental nature of the conflict which involves "eternal principles that preserve human liberty and oppose state absolutism." The Pope is defending something supra-national, supra-temporal. He is protecting "the rights of every individual and of the peoples of every nation."[71]

The following weeks, the same editors again took the same defense, and hailed the controversy as an opportunity for the Church to clarify the reality that Catholic Action was truly a non-political lay organization, intent solely upon spiritual as opposed to temporal activity.[72] Finally, the Monitor went beyond the present controversy and stated that the Fascist activities of recent months had only confirmed that the good done for the Church in Italy by the Mussolini government was done for anything but altruistic motives:

> The whole world knows now that Mussolini had thought to use the Church, as Napoleon before him, to consolidate his own power, and that his friendship for religion has been hypocritical.[73]

The Catholic News, newspaper of the Archdiocese of New York, reacted to the Catholic Action activity in Italy on two scores. Its editors said that the Fascists used as the excuse for their persecution the political activities of the groups, but that as a matter of fact, " . . . Catholic

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[71] "A Pontiff Undaunted," The Monitor, June 6, 1931.

[72] "A Providential Attack," The Monitor, June 13, 1931.

[73] "The Week," The Monitor, July 17, 1931.

Action shuns politics absolutely. Be express command of the Holy Father it is wholly non-political." The other argument in defense of Catholic Action referred back to the 1929 Concordat: "It is the Fascist who have violated it, and Premier Mussolini, if he hopes to deserve the respect of the world, must quickly bring his followers back to sanity."[74]

In the following issue, the New York paper recounted with favorable comment the fact that a statement of support for the Holy Father had been sent by a large number of American Bishops, at the suggestion of Patrick Cardinal Hayes, Archbishop of New York, from a celebration in Ogdensburg, New York, marking the fiftieth sacerdotal anniversary of the Ordinary of Ogdensburg, the Most Reverend Joseph H. Conroy. The text was reprinted:

> The Bishops assembled to solemnly observe the fiftieth anniversary of the priesthood of Bishop Conroy of Ogdensburg unite with me [i.e., Cardinal Hayes] in deploring the injustice that compels Your Holiness to defend the rights of the Church to train CAtholic Youth according to Christian principles, while we pledge our loyalty and filial obedience and thank God that Your Holiness rules the Church of God so valiantly. We are confident that an amicable arrangement will be effected.[75]

The same issue of the newspaper had an editorial in which the Fascists were charged with opposing the Catholic

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[74] "Outbreak in Rome," The Catholic News, June 6, 1931.

[75] "Cardinal Hayes SEnds Message to Holy Father," The Catholic News, June 13, 1931.

Action groups merely because they wished complete moral and spiritual control of the Catholic youth of Italy, and that the political charge was manufactured as "only a smoke screen." The editorial noted that once the facts were made known in America, not only did Catholics rally to the support of the Holy Father, but even some non-Catholic clergymen and secular papers came forth to condemn Mussolini.[76] Late in June, the Catholic News proposed another argument to defend the Pope, in the light of American tradition. They noted that in 1925, the United States Supreme Court had declared that the child does not belong to the state--the Oregon School decision. Therefore, Mussolini should be opposed especially by Americans because in his attempt to suppress Catholic Action, he was, in effect, calling for the State the exclusive right to education of and influence over youth.[77] When "Non abbiamo bisogno" was published, the Catholic News rejoiced that so much of the encyclical was concerned with a refutation of Mussolini's claim that the child belongs to the State. Not only this, but the whole controversy, according to the newspaper, vindicated the Church as opposed to absolute dictatorship: "There seems to be pretty general rejoicing that in the Holy Father at Rome there is one figure ready to challenge the absolutism of Mussolini."[78]

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[76] "All on the Side of the Pope," The Catholic News, June 13, 1931.

[77] "Mussolini's Un-American Doctrine," The Catholic News, June 27, 1931.

The Baltimore Catholic Review was equally impressed by the Catholic Action encyclical, and called it:

> . . . an indictment of Fascist tyranny, impertinence, irreligion, hypocrisy, braggadocio, and cowardice. It has done more to let the world know what Mussolini and his sycophants are trying to do than any other document ever leveld against Il Duce.[79]

Again the following week, the editorial page of the Baltimore newspaper carried an indictment of Fascism in the light of the recent encyclical, which had been reprinted in full: "The world knows that somebody is lying. The world knows that it is not the Pope." Therefore, in exposing the false charges of political activity by Catholic Action groups, the Holy Father had " . . . exposed Mussolini to the world."[80]

In Boston, The Pilot, always a spokeman for its Archbishop, William Cardinal O'Connell, welcomed the Catholic Action encyclical from the standpoint of the supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal. It was written, said the editors, to safeguard truth and justice, and to show that the Holy Father was not the aggressor:

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[78] "Pope's Encyclical Welcomes," The Catholic News, July 11, 1931.

[79] "Holy Fathers Shows Deceit of His Enemies," The Baltimore Catholic Review, July 10, 1931.

[80] "Mussolini Shows His Hand," The Baltimore Catholic Review, July 17, 1931.

> The fundamental error of those who have created this impasse which saddens the hearts of Christendom is the inability or the unwillingness to understand and acknowledge the proper limits of state activity.
>
> No party, no official, or group of officials may with justice act according to the false principle that the citizen is born for the State, or that the citizen's children are born to subserve the ends of the State.[81]

Once accord was finally reached between the Vatican and the Quirinal, editors applauded the recognition that the inalienable rights of the Church were to be protected.[82]

In summation, it must be admitted that these two instances of Church-State relations in Italy give a much clearer picture of the reasoning behind Catholic reaction. In the first case, when the Church seemed to be the winner in a struggle which had lasted many decades, the general reaction of the American Catholic press was one of happiness and support. The Lateran Treaties appeared to most to be the perfect example of just how Catholic Mussolini really was. The benefits for the Church were extolled, and the indication was given that both sides would greatly benefit from such an arrangement. Only a few instances of hesitancy are noted, mainly from the ever-suspicious Catholic World. For the rest, the opinion was offered that what was good for the Church in Italy was good for the Church universal. Mussolini was to be defended because of his Catholicity, and his good sense in proving good faith by favoring the Church of Rome.

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[81] "The Holy Father's Encyclical," The Pilot, July 11, 1931.

[82] "A New Accord," The Pilot, September 12, 1931.

In the Catholic Action controversy, we see that the periodicals were not quite as favorable to Mussolini. The general impression was that he had gravely erred, and that the defense of the Church demanded strong action on the part of the Holy Father. It is important to recognize, however, that in most cases, the opposition was due to this particular occurance without much criticism of Fascist political philosophy. Mussolini was rebuked for his stand on Catholic Action, not for his political philosophy or party tactics. It seems safe to say that to this point, Catholic reaction in America, with few exceptions, was gauged on the degree of favor which would accrue to the Church in Italy. Mussolini was generally favored as long as he did not disturb the Church, but continued actions which increased its prestige and honor in Italy. On the other hand, he was generally opposed only when he opposed the Church, and in most cases, only for the individual act which gave offense.

It should also be noted that the American CAtholic attitude is evident negatively as well, in the fact that so many diocesan newspapers said nothing about either the Lateran Treaties, (which they, at most would reprint without comment as news items) and the Catholic Action controversy, which was totally ignored by so many.

CHAPTER IV

THE MID-1930's:
SOME OUTSPOKEN CATHOLICS
AND
THE REACTION TO AN ENCYCLICAL

The 1930's saw in the Catholic Church in America the emergence of a few churchmen whose approach to social problems made them national figures. In this chapter, attention will be paid to four men who were so distinguished, as well as one organization of Catholics of the period. Two of the men were accused by some of Fascist sympathies, if not outright Fascism, and although opposed in great measure to the other two, the third individual was not without his critics who would wish to label him with this title. Finally, the fourth man, an Italian-American, distinguished himself as an influential spokesman toward other Italians in America, against the Fascist regime. The men were all priests--Charles E. Coughlin of Detroit, Edward Lodge Curran of Brooklyn, John A. Ryan of Washington, and Joseph Ciarrochi of Detroit. The movement, or organization, connected primarily with Coughlin and Curran, was known as the "Christian Front."

Father Coughlin

Possibly no man in America in the 1930's, with the exception of President Franklin D. Roosevelt himself, achieved more political and social notoriety at the grass-roots level than the Reverend Charles Edward Coughlin, priest of the Archdiocese of Detroit. His weekly radio programs, in which he discussed the major political and economic issues of the day, were heard throughout the United States, so much so, that Coughlin became a household word among Americans, and his Sunday afternoon radio program was "sacred time" for thousands of Americans.

Possibly no man, excluding again Roosevelt, was so heartily opposed and at the same time strongly supported by the American people. Even today, Coughlin receives plaudits and blame from those who remember those stormy days of depression, New Deal, and international turmoil. The man still lives in the semi-seclusion of his Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan, and no final judgment upon him is possible until his death makes accessible more data about his connections, his feelings, his attitudes, his motives and objectives. What follows here is rather a summary of what contemporaries and later commentator have had to say about the "Radio Priest," along with a bit more information that has become available since their judgments were made.

A good example of the support which Coughlin had is found in a book written in 1933 by a woman connected with him and the Shrine of the Little Flower, Ruth Mugglebee:

> Father Coughlin was a crusader in the ranks. His captain was Bishop Gallagher. Together they instituted a two-man crusade against prevailing peccancy, social, economic, and political. Father Coughlin's crusade against radicalism, paganism, and capitalism was a 'hostile' expedition under papal sanction.[1]

Still, Coughlin had his detractors, such as Harold Lavine, who noted in 1940 that the Detroit priest was anti-Semitic and against bankers. Coughlin was in favor of a silver basis for the nation's currency, and is accused of doing this for personal reasons, since it is held that he owned more silver than anyone else in the State of Michigan. Further, Lavine noted that Father Coughlin criticized organized labor in the 1930's, for which he was labeled a Fascist by many workers in Detroit and elsewhere.[2]

Coughlin was strongly anti-communist, and as early as January 12, 1930, he made an anti-communist speech in which he condemned the social and political principles as expressed in the Russian phenomenon.[3] However, the anti-Communism of Coughlin was also imputed as coming from ulterior, anti-Semitic and pro-Fascist motives. It was felt by some that Coughlin's anti-Communism derived from the original premise that it had been created by bad Jews and Gentiles. It was his contention that from its inception, Communism persecuted Protestants and Catholics, but not Jews. Therefore, it was felt that Coughlin's anti-Communism was a mask for anti-Semitism, and that as a matter of fact he favored the anti-Communist measures of Hitler in particular, but Mussolini to a lesser degree because Nazism and Fascism were anti-Semitic.[4] This charge is somewhat substantiated by a radio address given in early December, 1938, in which Coughlin accused the "controlled press" of America with failing to state accurately the Jewish Question as it truly existed. The priest claimed that German Jews were financing the Bolshevik Revolution, and that the American Jewish-controlled press wished to gloss over this fact and thereby protect Communism.[5] Certainly historians will allow for some degree of truth to the allegation of influence in the press, although its extent has not fully been demonstrated as yet.

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[1] Ruth Mugglebee, Father Coughlin of the Shrine of the Little Flower. (Boston: L. C. Page and Company, 1933), p. 232.

[2] Harold Lavine, Fifth Column in America (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1940), pp. 122-23.

[3] Louis B. Ward, Father Charles E. Coughlin--An Authorized Biography (Detroit: Tower Publications, 1933), pp. 55-59.

Other opponents claimed that Coughlin, by what was termed the transfer device of propaganda, was able to make it appear that his extreme views were those of the Catholic Church--in America and, if possible, in the whole world. They said Coughlin sought to:

> . . . carry the authority, sanction and prestige of something respected and revered by millions (the Roman Catholic Church) over to something else (his

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[4] Alfred M. and Elizabeth B. Lee, The Fine Art of Propaganda (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1939), pp. 62-68.

[5] Detroit Free Press, December 5, 1939.

> own economic, political and even radical views that he wishes to make more acceptable to us.[6]

Still, although many opposed him, and some accused him of Fascism or worse, many of Coughlin's detractors would hesitate to call him Fascist. Alfred M. Bingham, for example, saw Coughlin as an ally of Huey Long, and because of this fact, capable of doubling his supporters overnight. Still, Bingham could not bring himself to accuse Coughlin of outright Fascism:

> Coughlin by himself, as a Catholic in a country where such pre-Fascist symptoms as the Ku Klux Klan have shown a definitive anti-Catholic bias, could not be a Fascist leader.[7]

However, the Lees were not so sure of this and felt that his policies and programs clearly made Father Coughlin Fascist in sympathy if not in practice:

> . . . he advocates such undemocratic and fascistic measures as the use of "bullets instead of ballots" and the establishment of a "democratic Corporate State."[8]

Father Coughlin began publishing a newspaper in 1933 called Social Justice, and this came under direct fire from a number of angles, as an indication of Coughlin's Fascist sympathies. Allan Chase accused Coughlin of using the newspaper to spread Franco-Fascist propaganda throughout America:

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[6] Lee, pp. 69-73.

[7] Alfred M. Bingham, Insurgent America: Revolt of the Middle Classes (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), p. 188.

[8] Lee, p. 45.

"Charles Coughlin's Social Justice had become in many respects a house organ for the Falange . . ."[9] Henry Jager felt that the specific positions taken by this paper and in his radio talks made Coughlin obviously a Fascist. Jager noted the writings and speeches of Coughlin in which he opposed as unnecessary, strikes and lockouts, suggested that labor disputes be settled by compulsory arbitration, and in general proposed that the government have almost total control over the proceedings of mediation. Jager concludes: "In step with Fascism, out of step with the Church and in bitter conflict with organized labor, Father Coughlin is beginning to cut a sorry figure."[10]

However, in the most recent, complete, and scholarly treatment of the Detroit priest, Charles Tull is not quite so definitive. Tull suggests that Coughlin's opposition to communism, socialism, and capitalism was for some a sign that Coughlin favored the only seeming alternative left to him--Fascism, in some form, as being the only solution to the problems of America. Tull does not agree with this conclusion: "There is nothing concrete to support this accusation."[11] Tull goes further, saying that while he was called Fascist by some, notably Raymond G. Swing and Forrest Davis, the term Fascist does not necessarily apply to Coughlin, for the term "Fascist" was the ". . . scare word of the 1930's, much as 'communist' was in the 1950's."[12] Tull admits that Coughlin made reference to the Corporate State, but his whole political and economic outlook was too erratic to be classified, and he certainly did not fit a strict definition of the term "Fascist." Tull also claims that present appellation of Fascist to Coughlin stems from the current popular trend to call Popularism of the 1930's "homespun Fascism." It was known that Coughlin had strong support among the Populists in the Midwest, and therefore the accusation of Fascism is referred to Coughlin on these grounds. Tull doubts the major.[13]

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[9] Allan Chase, Falange: The Axis Secret Army in the Americas (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1943), p. 216.

[10] Henry Jager, Father Coughlin: --Promise or Menace? (New York: By the author, 1935), p. 14.

[11] Charles J. Tull, Father Coughlin and the New Deal (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1965), p. 65.

Coughlin is known from his speeches and writings to have opposed strongly the international bankers, accusing them of being responsible for the economic ills of the world, as well as still profiting while the rest of the world was suffering under the depression. On March 1, 1933, Coughlin wrote to Benito Mussolini, asking help in an idea Coughlin had to marshall worldwide support for collective opposition to the international bankers.[14] The fact that Coughlin was disposed to enlist the aid of the Fascist leader indicates at least some similarity of thought between the two.

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[12] _Ibid._, p. 246.

[13] _Ibid._

[14] IFMD, Coughlin to Mussolini, Detroit, March 1, 1933 (Microfilm T586, roll 419). (Letter)

Coughlin combined his aversion to bankers with isolationism. He felt that part of the cause of the depression could be found in the practice of American bankers investing in foreign concerns, "against all principles of patriotism and nationalism." This speech in the early 1930's went on to see even further danger in possible American entry in the League of Nations, the Permanent Court of International Justice, and the International Bank: "If we enter, we . . . practically sign away our national rights . . . "[15] The priest defended this isolationism and tried to show that it was not opposed to Christian principles:

> Christianity, therefore, which insists that we love our fellowmen . . . does not intimate for a moment that we shall jettison the cargo of our patriotism nor jeopardize the lastingness of our country.[16]

This isolationism was not unnoticed by the Fascisti in Italy, and in 1936, the Italian Vice Consul in Detroit wrote to the Italian Ambassador, noting with favor the isolationism of Coughlin, not only because it showed opposition to the Roosevelt administration, but also because it seemed to be an example (with which the Fascists were very familiar) of extreme nationalism, keeping America safe for the Americans.[17]

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[15] Charles E. Coughlin, Father Charles E. Coughlin's Radio Sermons, October, 1930--April, 1931 Complete (Baltimore: Knox and O'Leary, 1931), pp. 106-07.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 108.

[17] IFMD, Vice Consul of Italy to Ambassador, Detroit, January 18, 1936 (Copy) (Microfilm T586, Roll 419). (Dispatch transcribed)

Again, the priest was able to combine his anti-banking prejudice with isolationism as he professed it in 1935, at the inception of the Italo-Ethiopian War, which we will study in the following chapter. Father Coughlin opposed strongly the United States' condoning the sanctions which Great Britain had passed against Italy because of the war. He felt that such action by the United States would play into the hands of the British international bankers, part of the group he opposed so fiercely. Tull remarks: "For some inexplicable reason the priest championed the unpopular cause of Italy."[18]

Again in 1938, through the organ of Social Justice, Coughlin rededicated himself to the policy of isolationism. The storm clouds of world conflict were evident on the horizon, and the Detroit priest was worried that America would be involved in a war which, he felt, would only aid the Communist cause and the English, both of whom he hated. Therefore, in his weekly newspaper, he made a strong plea for the United States to stay clear of involvement in the war he thought sure was coming:

> . . . our bright young men will be dropping bombs on Japanese babies and their mothers to make the Orient safe for Communism--or on Italian women and children to make the Mediterranean safe for the traffic of the British Empire.[19]

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[18] Tull, p. 102.

[19] "The Triumvirate of Destruction," Social Justice, February 7, 1938.

Certainly one of the questions which has to be asked in regard to Father Coughlin and his policies is this: were his anti-Communism, anti-banking, and anti-British sentiment, combined with an antipathy for capitalism and the Jews, policies which made him pro-Fascist, or did he just hold these opinions in common with the Fascists? On March 13, 1938, Coughlin suggested to his radio audience for the first time that the answer to the ills facing America could be found in the formation of the Corporate State, very similar to that which had been set up in Fascist Italy. However, Coughlin insisted that such a plan was not a transplant from Italy, Germany, or Russia. It is alleged that he further proposed as part of this plan that there be a national religion of the majority, anti-Semitic laws, and a federal dictatorship of employer-employee relationships.[20] Again in April of that same year, Coughlin reaffirmed his suggestion that since American democracy was in a decadent state, the only solution to the condition was the formation of the Corporate State.[21]

In the late summer, 1936, the Osservatore Romano made its most obvious reference to the Detroit priest. Alexander Kirk reported to the Department of State that the article which he enclosed was far from approval of Coughlin's activity.

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[20] Lee, p. 11. (These allegations seem justified to some extent by both Social Justice editorials, and various Coughlin radio speeches.)

[21] Tull, p. 243.

He negated the contention of some papers in the United States that Bishop Michael Gallagher of Detroit claimed Vatican support for Coughlin's activities and produced this article as evidence. Kirk wanted especially noted that the Vatican daily and the Holy See felt that liberty must be respected, but also propriety, and therefore stated that:

> . . . a speaker who inveighs against persons who represent the supreme social authority with the evident danger of weakening among the masses the respect that is due to such authority sins against elementary proprieties.[22]

This type of activity was even more reprehensible when the speaker was a priest. Coughlin seems to have been indirectly censured in Rome for his strong anti-Roosevelt statements.

Father Coughlin's anti-Semitic utterances, of course, are merely mild indications of the possible connection he had with Fascism, for the Mussolini government was not openly anti-Semitic until late in the 1930's, and then only mildly and at the insistence of Hitler. Coughlin, however, was anti-Semitic at least politically and economically throughout the whole period, especially in attributing to the Jews the blame for the Communist revolution in Russia and for the economic depression on their role as international bankers. These statements came under attack from many quarters; and, finally, an official protest was sent to Pope Pius XI by Rabbi Jerome Daniel Folkman of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The

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[22] L'Osservatore Romano, September 3, 1936. cf., USDS, Kirk to State, Rome, September 3, 1936 (811.404/180). (Dispatch)

Rabbi, in December of 1938, wrote to Rome asking the Pope for an affirmation that the speeches of Coughlin in which he excoriated the Jews were not reflective of the thought of the Roman Catholic Church, and did not have any ecclesiastical sanction. The Rabbi stated that he felt such actions and speeches by the Detroit priest would eventually destroy democracy in America.[23] A few days later, Marshall M. Vance of the United States Department of State reported to Washington from Windsor, Ontario, on the state of affairs in Detroit. He noted the anti-Semitic speeches of Coughlin which had caused the letter of the Rabbi, as well as editorial comment in the Detroit Free Press against Father Coughlin. Vance also mentioned a libel suit against the Free Press which Coughlin had instituted. The people of the area took both sides of the controversy, said Vance, and there was " . . . no crystalization of general sentiment . . . pro or con . . ."[24] The libel suit was later dropped, and Rome never replied officially to the letter of the Rabbi, although later Vatican statements against anti-Semitism in Italy and Germany certainly made the position of the Church clear to the world.

Coughlin's speeches, in this as in other areas, received support from the Italian press and government. Harold Lavine notes that on January 16, 1939, Coughlin was praised by the Fascist newspaper, Regime Fascista, which had opposed the Vatican for protesting the Italian anti-Semitic tactics.[25] Two months later, the Italian Ambassador in Washington wrote to Rome on the subject of Father Coughlin and the Coughlin newspaper, Social Justice. He noted that pro-Irish, anti-English isolationism of the magazine, which, although anti-totalitarian, continued to exhibit " . . . una costante sympathia per l'Italia."[26]

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[23] Detroit Free Press, December 10, 1938.

[24] USDS, Vance to State, Windsor, December 14, 1938 (865.4016). (Dispatch)

Coughlin more and more supported the Italian Fascist government in general, and its leader in particular. On May 23, 1938, Social Justice published the picture of Mussolini as its "Man of the Week."[27] Just a few months later, Coughlin wrote a personal letter to Mussolini, in which he invited Il Duce to write for the Coughlin review. He suggested that the article might well clarify Mussolini's attitude toward "...the Jews, toward the national question and toward any other point that you wish to make clear for the American readers." Coughlin guaranteed not only publication of anything Mussolini would wish to write, but to back it up throughout its pages: "Social Justice . . . will be happy not only to publicize your article but to support it editorially." Coughlin gave as well what might have prompted him to write to Italy: "praying that the Italian Empire will crush Communism."[28]

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[25] Lavine, p. 131.

[26] IFMD, Italian Embassy to Ministry of External Affairs, Washington, March 15, 1938 (Microfilm T586, Roll 419). (Dispatch)

[27] Social Justice, May 23, 1938.

That same year, Social Justice was strong in its support of pro-Fascist ideas and activities. In June, Coughlin proposed the "Million League," which he described as a union of social justice "platoons" which could merge into a " . . . great thinking army that can swing our teetering nation back to sanity and right thinking."[29] A month later, Coughlin's anti-Communism led him to urge all his followers the support of the Christian Front, for it would preserve America from Communism.[30] Again, the anti-Communist theme, which appeared so often in his writings and speeches. As is known, the President of the United States was accused of aiding the cause of Communism by Coughlin, and even his wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, was not immune from Coughlin's accusations that she was pro-Red.[31]

Father Coughlin's support of Fascist political philosophy became more vocal at the end of 1938. In November he spoke against the democratic form of government, stating that it was little more than a magic of numbers. In later speeches that month, he proposed that the United States Constitution be abandoned in favor of the Corporate State plan of Fascist Italy.[32] At this time, he had published in Social Justice the anti-Semitic "Protocols of Zion," which had long before been shown a forgery.[33]

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[28] IFMD, Coughlin to Mussolini, Detroit, September 6, 1938 (Microfilm T586, Roll 419). (Letter)

[29] Social Justice, June 13, 1938.

[30] Social Justice, July 25, 1938.

[31] Social Justice, July 11, 1938.

Early in the following year, Coughlin continued to show his anti-Semitism, particularly when he defended, on March 27, the Fascist persecution of Jews in Italy, recently undertaken. Coughlin felt that it was understandable for the Italian regime to react in this way because "most Jews are anti-Fascist." On April 3 of the same year, the picture of Adolph Hitler was printed on the back cover of Social Justice, and the editorial of the same issue praised the Rome-Berlin axis as a "firm rampart against Communism."[34]

Protestant thought on the subject of Father Coughlin is well summed up in an article which appeared in the Christian Century early in 1940. Certainly there were many Protestants who opposed Coughlin, and some who supported his stance. However, most were asking why he was allowed to continue his attacks upon the administration, the Constitution, and the Jews. The author felt that Coughlin was not silenced for many reasons: his ecclesiastical superiors did not want to make a martyr out of him, they did not want to give the impression that free speech was limited within the Church, and they did not want to seem to be giving in to public, particularly Protestant, protest. However, the main reason as seen by the author was that the social thought of the Church was so divergent, since it had to be deduced from the general principles proposed by the social encyclicals. The problem went still deeper in that, by definition, the laity work under the direction of the hierarchy, and yet no member of the hierarchy had spoken out strongly on the major social issues of the day. Therefore, Coughlin's voice became the strongest and most influential voice in American Catholicism. What was needed, it was felt, was stronger leadership on the part of the Catholic hierarchy, especially in the realm of strong support of the American form of government.[35]

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[32] Lavine, pp. 127-29.

[33] Social Justice, March 27, 1939.

[34] Social Justice, April 3, 1939.

The files of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice provide ample evidence of the effect that Charles E. Coughlin and his speeches and writings were having on the American scene. There are contained there many letters both favorable and unfavorable to the Detroit priest. Some would defend him, saying that his detractors were Communists and Jews.[36] Others would bitterly oppose all that Coughlin was saying and doing. Included in this number is an interesting letter from an Italian-American:

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[35] Evelyn A. Cummins, "Catholicism and Father Coughlin," Christian Century, LVII (January 24, 1940), pp. 106-08.

[36] E.g., USDJC, M. B. Farley to Justice, Cleveland, February 2, 1940 (235343-10, Sec. 1). (Letter)

> . . . hundreds of Italian-Americans believe that Father Coughlin is not only a disgrace to our Church, but a real menace to our great country.[37]

The Department also received numerous Protestant publications, tracts, and the like, opposing the Radio Priest. The Hour, a small New York publication, called Coughlin a Fascist on February 10, 1940. The New York New Weekly accused him of being in league with the German bund, and a minister in Bayonne, New Jersey, accused Coughlin's supporters in the Christian Front of being Nazi sympathizers.[38]

As was said in the beginning of this section, the final verdict on Charles E. Coughlin, if it ever can be made, will have to await his death and the availability of more material. There is no doubt that he was anti-Communist, and little doubt that he can be labeled anti-Semitic. Whether the actions and philosophy that he followed, discounting what people may have accused him of, in opposition to the extreme positive problems of economic and political life in the 1930's led him to a more extreme position of Fascism is doubtful, but evidence is mounting to the affirmative.

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[37] USDJC, Marco Dorio to Justice, New York, February 1, 1940 (235343-10, Sec. 1). (Letter)

[38] USDJC, 235343-10, Sec. 1. (Enclosure)

The Christian Front

In 1938, an organization was founded, based in New York City, and called the Christian Front. Its avowed purpose was to unite Christians against Communism.[39] In many ways, it mirrored the opinions of Father Coughlin, and therefore to some, it was pro-Fascist, since it was Coughlin's organization, although it would seem that he never formally connected himself with its organization or activities, merely giving support and encouragement. However, its anti-Communism, anti-Semitism, and opposition to the policies of the Roosevelt administration were such that the connection seemed much more than pure accident. Theodore Irwin, by no means a disinterested observer, described the Christian Front as: "The most widely ramified hate movement since the ugliest days of the Ku Klux Klan." He referred to its members as:

> Composed chiefly of admirers of Charles E. Coughlin and sundry hoodlums, crackpots, misguided patriots and Bundsters[40]

Further, he was especially upset by the anti-Semitic tendencies of the group, and the violence to which this feeling led some of the members. He noted that there were regular street meetings of the Front in New York, " . . .at which crowds have been exhorted to liquidate the Jews in America." Another opponent, Chase, adds that the group was under some influence of the Spanish underground forces aiding the Franco regime, the Falange. He claimed that agents of the Falange, " . . . mingle regularly with Italian longshoremen in Brooklyn and with known members of the Christian Front on the New York waterfront."[41]

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[39] Tull, p. 244.

[40] Theodore Irwin, Inside the Christian Front (Washington: American Council on Public Affairs, 1940), p. 3.

The Christian Front did not escape the notice of the Italian Fascist government. Early in 1938, the Italian ambassador wrote to the Royal Ministry of Popular Culture at Rome, reporting on the formation of the group, and certain factors of their policy which agreed strongly with the Fascist party policy. The ambassador noted particularly the anti-Semitism of the Front organization, and noted his agreement with such a policy since the Jews in New York, he claimed, were taking advantage of immigrants to the United States, including Italian immigrants. Finally, he noted the opposition of the Front to various policies of the Franklin Roosevelt administration, particularly the isolationist approach of the Front members.[42]

Harold Lavine notes the men who were outstanding in the organization: John F. Cassidy, Marcel Honore, and Walter Ogden. He also asserts that at least two clergymen were "on the fringe" of the group: Patrick F. Scanlon (actually a layman), managing editor of the Brooklyn Tablet and the Reverend Edward Lodge Curran, head of the International Catholic Truth Society.[43] Lavine notes also that the success of the Front in the New York area was due in large measure to the fact that it was considered a Catholic organization, at least in the sense that a good number of the members were Roman Catholic. Lavine felt that the Front was somewhat protected because its members were Catholic in majority, since between 12,000 and 14,000 of the members of the New York City police department were Irish Catholics.[44]

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[41] Chase, p. 237.

[42] IFMD, Ambassador to Royal Ministry of Popular Culture, Washington, March 14, 1938 (Microfilm, T586, Roll 419). (Dispatch)

The tactics of the Christian Front are described by Theodore Irwin, another obvious opponent of the Front. He was especially opposed to the anti-Semitic tendencies of the group, and accused Front members of open acts of violence against people who either were known as Jews or were Jewish-looking. This anti-Semitism was especially aimed at finances, for Irwin claimed that abusive stickers were placed on the stores of Jewish merchants, a "Christian Index" was compiled, aimed at an organized boycott of Jewish-owned stores, and picketing was used to harass unfriendly radio stations and sponsoring Jewish merchants. Irwin felt that neutrality and isolationism were marks of the Front, added to an affection for Hitler and his politics. The basic premise of the organization, however, made it a " . . . loosely knit coalition acting for a score of more groups openly Fascist in sympathies."[45]

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[43] Lavine, p. 88.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Irwin notes that while the Front was most notably active in New York, its presence was felt in other cities of the United States as well. In Boston, the Christian Front was organized by Francis P. Moran, and it slowly became more openly anti-Semitic. However, its progress was retarded by the fact that William Cardinal O'Connell opposed the group. The Front was strong in its support of Father Coughlin, and here as in other cities, the Radio Priest would speak to meetings of the members through a special arrangement of wire communications. A Washington affiliate group, the National Gentile League, was founded in the late 1930's by Donald Shea, but lack of interest brought it to a swift demise, although its major activity seems merely to have been the distribution of Social Justice to the people of the Captial. In St. Louis, the Front had some small success, but at the same time is soundly denounced by the Jesuits at St. Louis University, and therefore their following suffered a notable decrease.[46] Still, Irwin quotes the Reverend Edward Lodge Curran, who claimed an affiliate group to the Christian Front, the Social Justice clubs, which were permitted in Brooklyn and Baltimore by the bishops of those sees. In St. Louis, Curran claimed that Archbishop John Glennon had even appointed three clergymen to be moderators of these clubs.[47] Irwin felt, however, that the greatest aid that the Front had was the negative help of the hierarchy, the fact that no bishop had directly condemned it, nor done anything more than oppose it unofficially. He called for a change in this attitude:

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[45] Irwin, pp. 3-4.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

> Of greatest aid to the Front is the absence of a disapproving word from official, authoritative spokesmen of the Catholic Church. Let the Catholic hierarchy in our cities speak out bluntly against the mongers of anti-Semitism, and it may strike the death blow to the Front.[48]

Other affiliate groups could be found which espoused the Christian Front principles, while expressing themselves in a different manner. For example, Joseph E. McWilliams had founded the Christian Mobilizers, a more violent branch of the original organization. Father Coughlin repudiated them for their extremely violent tactics, but they later gained in strength because of the arrest and then acquittal of a number of Christian Front members in early 1940 for an alleged violent plot.[49] The group bore out the suspicion attached to it when it later combined with the Ku Klux Klan.[50]

The plot referred to above, involved seventeen members of the Christian Front in the New York area who were accused by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of planning to attack with force certain properties of the government in the New York area. When the news was made public, Father Coughlin made a hasty denial of connection with the Front, and therefore with the plot. A few days later, he admitted his position of support for the Front, but denied complicity in the plot to overthrow the government. In this connection, the archives of the Department of Justice have yielded an interesting memo:

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[47] _Ibid_., p. 11.

[48] _Ibid_., pp. 22-23.

[49] Lavine, p. 92.

[50] _Ibid_., p. 94.

> Shortly after the F. B. I. exposure of the Christian Front plot and Coughlin's hasty disavowal of the Front, the editor of a well-known magazine had a private conversation with one of the Front leaders. 'It looks as though Coughlin was running out on you,' said the editor. 'No, he won't do that,' was the confident reply; 'if he doesn't defend us we know enough about him to finish him--and we've told him so.' Two days later Coughlin publicly changed his mind and embraced the Front again.[51]

When the alleged conspirators were brought to trial, the Federal government was not able to prove its case sufficiently, and the seventeen members of the Christian Front were acquitted. The following day, the New York Times noted that Father Coughlin praised the acquittal, and felt that " . . . the Christian Front movement will emerge more vigorous than ever."[52] The Department of Justice immediately began to receive mail from both sides of the question: some favorable to the verdict; other, unfavorable. For those who opposed the outcome of the trial, Father Coughlin's name was the keystone to the protest, while the correspondents favorably felt that the Front was truly a religious organization, looking out for the interests of a better America. Many was dire consequences to the acquittal:

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[51] USDJC, 235343-10, Sec. 2 (February 21, 1940). (Departmental Memo)

[52] New York Times, June 25, 1940.

> The acquittal of 9 Christian Fronters charged with plotting the overthrow of the government has been the go-ahead sign for the fascist movement in the U.S.[53]

The Christian Front has been examined not merely because of its connections, however deep they may have been, with Father Coughlin. Also, it should be noted that many of the activities of the Front--the violence, the anti-Communism and strong nationalism, were definite symptoms of Fascist movements. Although most noted for its anti-Semitism, which played a minor role in the Italian Fascist scene, the Christian Front showed that it was also capable of mounting vocal and physical force against the United States government.

Edward Lodge Curran

At this point, it is necessary to examine further the case of the Reverend Edward Lodge Curran of Brooklyn. He, too, wrote to the Department of Justice once the Christian Front members had been acquitted in the aforementioned case, but he did more than give his support of the verdict. Curran asked for an investigation of those who " . . . tricked the Federal Department of Justice into arresting and trying sixteen men, not one of whom has been proven guilty." He noted that the reason behind it all could have been an attempt by pro-Communists to distract the Department of Justice from investigation of Communist front organizations.[54]

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[53] USDJS, Peggy Margalies to Justice, Brooklyn, July 4, 1940 (235343-10, Sec. 3). (Letter)

A Curran supporter in New York wrote nine days later, reaffirming almost word for word the contention of Curran that the Fronters were rightly considered not guilty, and that the charges were placed because the Department had been fooled by pro-Communists.[55]

Curran personally was a man independent of much of the turmoil surrounding Father Coughlin and the Christian Front, yet certainly sympathetic to the cause, and as mentioned above, considered at least "on the fringe" of the Front by some. Therefore, there would be those who would accuse him of pro-Fascist tendencies. He did not, however, always share the totality of Coughlin and Front opinion. In 1933, he sent a telegram to the United States Department of State, strongly protesting the anti-Semitic activities of the Hitler regime in Germany.[56]

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[54] USDJC, Curran to Justice, Brooklyn, July 2, 1940 (235343-10, Sec. 3). (Letter)

[55] USDJC, Angelo Murult to Justice, New York, July 11, 1940 (235343-10, Sec. 3). (Letter)

The Brooklyn priest did, however, share the militant anti-Communism of the group and of the Detroit priest. He was a major organizer for a massive anti-Communist rally scheduled to be held in New York City on April 13, 1937. At the meeting, the major speeches were to be given by Governor Alfred E. Smith, Matthew Woll, Vice-President of the American Federation of Labor, George V. Harvey, President of the Borough of Queens, and Curran himself. The meeting was sponsored by Curran's International Catholic Truth Society, and in connection with the meeting, Curran wrote to President Roosevelt asking that the President send a message of support of the anti-Communist activities of the group. The letter was referred to the Department of State, and an aide inscribed at the bottom of the request, "Too late for consideration."[57]

Curran at this time was also highly interested in the Spanish Civil War, another cause which would make some consider him to be pro-Fascist. Through the medium of the Brooklyn Tablet, he formed an organization for relief aid to Spain, the "Tablet Spanish Relief Fund." The corporation was registered with the Department of State as a group sending money out of the country, and monthly reports of expenditures were recorded, as by law, they must. The recipient of the funds was listed as Tomas Cardinal Goma, primate of Spain, and the manner of assistance was described as "medical aid and assistance in Spain for food and clothing to relieve human suffering in that country."[58]

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[56] USDS, Curran to State, Brooklyn, March 21, 1933 862.4016/17). (Letter)

[57] USDS, Curran to Roosevelt, Brooklyn, April 7, 1937 (811.001--Roosevelt, F. D./5438). (Letter)

Curran was connected with a noted pro-Franco propagandist, however, Merwin K. Hart, president of the National Economic Council. George Seldes makes this fact known, and connects Curran and Coughlin, saying Curran was " . . . Coughlin's eastern representative of the Christian Front."[59]

Hart was also chairman of the "American Union for Nationalism Spain," and in that capacity asked United States' support for the Franco cause, at least through a continued embargo of war materials to Spain.[60] When the Franco forces had won the victory, Hart wrote to the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, asking for an appointment to see the Secretary that he might petition for diplomatic recognition for the

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[58] USDS, Relief Registration--852.48--Tablet Publishing Company, May 8, 1937.

[59] George Sledes, One Thousand Americans (New York: Boni and Gaer, 1947), p. 221.

[60] USDS, Hart to Roosevelt, New York, January 26, 1939 (853.01/430). (Letter)

Franco government.[61] This recognition, however, came quicker than even Hart might have hoped for; and, therefore, he wrote a few days later to the Secretary of State, expressing satisfaction and commendation for the recognition given to the new Spanish government.[62]

Curran, then, was a man of many causes, and many talents, and as such, connected himself with a number of groups sympathetic to controversial causes. His anti-Communism, nationalism, and favoritism of the Franco government would lead some to connect him with the anti-Communism, nationalism, and favoritism of the Franco government by the Italian fascists. The rest will have to be left to a judgment of the depth of his involvement with the Christian Front and the Coughlin movement, both of which have been seen to have been accused of Fascist tendencies.

Coughlin himself ran into trouble in the early 1940's particularly as the international situation became more threatening. In April, 1942, Attorney General Francis Biddle instructed the Postmaster General, Frank Walker, to revoke the second-class mailing permit of Coughlin's Social Justice magazine. Tull notes this was a time when the

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[61] USDS, Hart to Hull, New York, March 31, 1939 (852.01/568). (Letter)

[62] USDS, Hart to Hull, New York, April 3, 1939 (852.01/579). (Letter)

Department of Justice " . . . began to crack down on homegrown Fascists and other antiwar agitators."[63] Soon after, Coughlin was silenced by the successor to his great supporter, Bishop Gallagher, Archbishop Edward Mooney.

Monsignor John A. Ryan

John A. Ryan, of the Catholic University of America, was known throughout the United States as an exponent of Catholic social principles. He was also known to be opposed to the philosophy and methods of Father Coughlin of Detroit. Ryan was known as a liberal, but at times was accused of affection for Fascism. His most recent biographer feels Ryan had no true leaning toward Fascism, except that he saw it as preferable, if there be a choice merely between the two, to Communism. He saw the struggle in Europe as between Communism and Democracy, rather than Fascism versus Democracy. Therefore, he feared Fascism less, and was for this reason suspected by some American liberals.[64] At the same time, however, Ryan had a fear of those who professed anti-Communism merely as a tool to avoid the projection of social justice principles.[65]

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[63] Tull, p. 234.

[64] Francis L. Broderick, Right Reverend New Dealer--John A. Ryan (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 234.

[65] Ibid.

When Father Coughlin's opposition to Franklin D. Roosevelt and his administration grew, Ryan was enlisted by the Democratic Party to defend the President, thereby neutralizing the effect of the Coughlin utterances on the voting habits of the Catholics of the United States. Therefore, during the election campaign of 1936, on October 8, Ryan spoke on nationwide radio to defend the President from the charge made by Father Coughlin that the President was a Communist. Ryan decried, " . . . those timid tories who see Communism just around the corner . . ." However, Ryan refused to put a label on Coughlin, saying they were in error " . . . who think that Father Coughlin is going to set up a Fascist state the day after the elections." As a matter of fact, Ryan predicted that if Roosevelt were defeated, Communism in America would grow. Still, Ryan, in the same broadcast, continued to express the feeling that Italian Fascism was the lesser of two evils when compared to Communism, for Fascism was not as despotic and showed consideration for religion.[66]

Monsignor Ryan, in 1938, studied the case of Fascism and came to some interesting conclusions for those who would accuse him of sympathy with the movement. He noted that Fascism was based on government by the elite, mainly because the masses could not be trusted with ultimate political power. Such a theory might be acceptable, he said, if the government promoted the common good, but not if this be done by force, for then the operation of the government is contrary to the feelings of the majority and therefore to the common good. Actually, in practice, Ryan saw Fascism as a dictatorship in which society was the end, and therefore individuals within society were the means to that end, certainly a diminution of human dignity. He also noted that in Italy, there was the denial of the liberties of speech, press, assembly and political opposition, liberties guaranteed by Catholic principles. Ryan could see no other reason why Fascism had not been more soundly condemned by the Church, officially, than that it was still more theory than practice.[67] In that same year, 1938, Ryan discussed the advent of Fascism in more detail, in a pamphlet. He said at this time that there would be two cases in which such a distatorship as the Fascist would be acceptable to Catholic teaching: either the community was unable to provide or sustain any other regime to promote the common good, or else there would be more serious injury to the community if an attempt were made to overthrow the Fascist regime by force. It was difficult for Ryan to see how the community in Italy could not provide another form of government. As for the second possibility, there was a chance that this was true:

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[66] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

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[67] John A. Ryan, "March Study Topic: Fascism, Communism and Democracy," Catholic Action, XX (February, 1938), pp. 19-21.

> On the other hand, if the majority or the "greater and saner" part of the people acquiesce in the rule of a self-chosen elite, a ruling class which is tolerably efficient, there seems to be no way of proving such a government is contrary to Catholicism or to right reason.[68]

The economic theories of the Corporate State were likewise found by Ryan to be out of step with Catholic principles. He notes that "Quadragesimo Anno" suggested a vocational group system of labor, but provided that where this was done, it was to be on a democratic and local, rather than a dictatorial and centralized basis. This was part of the extreme lengths to which patriotism in Italy had gone, lengths which Ryan considered immoral and which included the preference for war as a normal means of promoting the national welfare, national progress and interests.[69] Fascism was further faulted by Ryan for its non-toleration of trade unions, something which Ryan considered basically necessary for a true society and its welfare.[70]

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[68] John A. Ryan, Relation of Catholicism to Fascism, Communism and Democracy (Washington: N. C. W. C., 1938), p. 5.

[69] Ibid., p. 8.

[70] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

In August, 1938, Monsignor Ryan compared the governments of Russia, Germany, and Italy at the time of the Catholic International Peace Conference at The Hague. While all denied individual rights, there were differences in their tactics. Russia, he felt, if it were to drop the plan of world revolution, and become non-violent and non-collective on an international scale, could win the respect of other nations. Germany, however, was clearly the most definite and proximate threat to international order. Ryan felt that Fascist Italy, was not governed by a madman such as Hitler, but still might attack a weaker nation if it were in the interests of its extreme nationalism.[71]

A later publication by John A. Ryan, with the collaboration of Francis J. Boland, summarized their opposition to the Fascist political and economic philosophy. Fascism was contrary to the moral order primarily because of its rejection of freedom of speech, press, assembly and political opposition. Further, in holding that the individual exists solely for the good of the state, the Fascists betrayed a lack of understanding of the dignity of the human individual. This deification of the State by the Fascists even went so far as to create a nationalism which was so exaggerated that it negated the principles of Christian brotherhood. Finally, it was Fascist policy that war was an acceptable means of promoting the national welfare and aggrandizement, a principle that Christians could not accept.[72]

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[71] Broderick, pp. 252-53.

However, as much as Monsignor Ryan was opposed to the Fascist doctrine, he did not deem it necessary that the Church specifically condemn Fascism, nor did he feel it strange that to this point nothing definite had been said in Rome. Ryan defended the silence of the official Church on the grounds that the Fascists had not really expounded their policies sufficiently to warrant an answer or defense from Catholics. Further, the feeling that these policies were in a sense more theoretical, and that the Fascist government had not actually put them into practice, except on rare occasions.[73]

Monsignor Joseph Ciarrocchi

Father Coughlin was not the only priest in the Archdiocese of Detroit whose opinions on Fascism are notable. An Italian-American who came to the United States in 1906, the Reverend Joseph Ciarrocchi is notable for his strong opposition to the Mussolini regime. This man was ordained for the Archdiocese of Fermo in Italy on March 29, 1902, and four years later, he arrived in America to teach at the Polish seminary in the Archdiocese, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, in Orchard Lake. (Ciarrocchi held the degrees of D.D., Ph.D., and U.J.D.) In 1910, the priest founded a newspaper for Italian-Americans, La Voce del Popolo. Throughout his life, he did a great deal of work toward Americanizing Italian immigrants to the United States. In 1919, he founded the Italian Parish of Santa Maria in Detroit. He was a notable figure within the Italian community in Detroit, and also was known in the surrounding territory, so influential was his voice.[74]

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[72] John A. Ryan and Francis J. Boland, Catholic Principles of Politics (New York: Macmillan, 1947), pp. 121-22.

[73] Ibid., p. 122.

Ciarrocchi used his newspaper, particularly in the early 1930's to oppose the tactics and philosophy of the Mussolini government. The editor was particularly outspoken in his newspaper. He promoted love for America among Italians who had come to its shores, and therefore opposed not only the Mussolini government in Italy, and its sympathizers in the United States, but also any element of crime that was present in the Italian community. He vigorously, in word and deed, opposed the Mafia and any other illegal organizations, and for this reason he was often threatened with bodily harm and damage to his property.[75]

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[74] Biographical material from the Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit.

In 1921, four years before the Catholic Church honored him with the title of Domestic Prelate, Ciarrocchi had been made a member of the Order of the Knights of the Crown of Italy by Victor Emmanuel III. However, in 1936, after his anti-Fascist publication had for a number of years opposed Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, the honor was taken back by the King at the behest of the Mussolini government. Enrico G. Belcredi, Italian consul in Detroit, was quoted at the time as saying the reason Monsignor Ciarrocchi was denied the honor was because " . . . the editorial policy of La Voce del Popolo had displeased His Majesty. This publication has in many ways misrepresented affairs in Italy."[76] Ciarrocchi, however, was not disturbed by this action, for he was quoted as saying that it would not deter him from his primary goal-- " . . . principles of Christianity and American democracy."[77]

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[75] Detroit News, April 18, 1920.

[76] Detroit News, July 31, 1936.

[77] Ibid.

La Voce del Popolo continued to be outspoken in its opposition to Mussolini, even more strongly as the Italian government offended the Americanism and Christian principles of the editor. In September, 1939, Ciarrocchi disputed the recent anti-Semitic activities of the Mussolini government. He called these actions contrary to necessity, Italian spirit and tradition. Further, they were against the wishes of the Holy Father.[78] When Ciarrocchi considered the tendency of the Fascists toward military activity, he spoke out even more forcefully in his newspaper. He said that Italy was becoming extremely imperialistic, that Mussolini wanted war with France for possession of her colonies, war with England for control of the Mediterranean. The Fascist government was considered to have concern for nothing but itself, but the monsignor held out hope that the Italian people in Italy, and certainly in America, were against the possibility of war, and against any alliance with Germany, which also incurred the wrath of the editor.[79]

This Italian-American priest was not totally negative, however, and it is clear that his principles of American Democracy and Christian social action were the overriding factors in his life. He supported, for example, the program of the Catholic Worker--the newspaper as well as the houses of hospitality and the cooperative farms.[80]

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[78] "L'Antisemitismo in Italia," La Voce del Popolo, September 1, 1939.

[79] "Che cosa bolle in pentola in Italia?" La Voce del Popolo, November 24, 1939.

While the main concern of this dissertation is the American Catholic reaction to Italian Fascism, it is well to consider at least this one Italian American whose activity and writing made such a contribution to the thought of his compatriots in the mid-west. When he died, on September 28, 1954, Monsignor Joseph Ciarrocchi was hailed in Detroit as a great priest and a great American.

Quadragesimo Anno

In discussing the views of Monsignor John A. Ryan, it was mentioned that he commented on the corporative system as it was expounded in the encyclical of Pius XI, "Quadragesimo Anno." The following sections from the encyclical are pertinent to the subject:

> Within recent times, as all are aware, a special syndical and corporative organization has been inaugurated which, in view of the subject of the present Encyclical, demands of Us some mention and opportune comment.
>
> The State here grants legal recognition to the syndicate or union, and thereby confers on it some of the features of a monopoly, for in virtue of this recognition, it alone can represent respectively workingmen and employers, and it alone can conclude labor contracts and labor agreements. Affiliation to the syndicate

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[80] "Un appello del 'Catholic Worker,'" La Voce del Popolo, October 13, 1939.

> is optional for everyone; but in this sense only can the syndical organization be said to be free, since the contribution of the union and other special taxes are obligatory for all who belong to a given branch . . .
>
> Strikes and lock-outs are forbidden. If the contending parties cannot come to an agreement, public authority intervenes.
>
> Little reflection is required to perceive the advantage of the institution thus summarily described; peaceful collaboration of the classes, repression of Socialist organizations and efforts, and the moderating influence of a special ministry.
>
> . . . there are some who fear that the State is substituting itself in the place of private initiative, instead of limiting itself to necessary and sufficient help and assistance . . . it risks serving particular political aims rather than contributing to the initiation of a better social order.
>
> We believe, moreover, as a necessary consequence, that the end intended will be more certainly attained the greater contribution furnished by men of technical, commercial and social competence, and, more still, by Catholic principles and their application.[81]

Some might take this to be an obvious endorsement, on the part of the Pope, of the Fascist principles of the Corporate state. However, Catholic commentators on the encyclical were quick to reassure American readers that this was not the case. Charles P. Bruehl, for example, made it clear that Pius XI was speaking of corporatism not in the sense of cooperation and organization of any kind for individual or collective purposes of the State, but rather organization for the common good. He presupposes the basis of the moral law, which requires certain limitations on individual rights, but only toward definite human ends, such as mutual helpfulness, coordination and subordination of causes.[82] Christian Corporatism could not be identified with Fascism or any other totalitarian form of government, even though there are some elements shared in common by all. The difference, for Bruehl, lies in the fact that in a Christian society, necessary discipline toward the common good is voluntary, while in Fascist society, it is imposed by the State from without.[83] Further, besides the stress of the Papal encyclicals on liberty for the individual, they do not link corporatism with any particular form of government. The Pope considered vocational groups to be non-political, able to fit into any political system which does not demand control of all facets of social life.[84]

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[81] "Quadragesimo Anno, On Reconstructing the Social Order," in Five Great Encyclicals (New York: Paulist Press, 1958), paragraphs 91, 92, 94, 95, 96.

Referring directly to the Fascist State it is the feeling of this author that in Italy they experimented with corporate society as a means toward social reconstruction. It did not, however, meet the Papal ideal, although it might possibly be accepted as a provisional model in which the elements of the system might be applied. After such a study, it would be possible to extract those elements which were unsatisfactory, or not in keeping with Christian principles.[85] Already, it was evident that the Corporatism of Italy had been imposed by the State for its own ends, an unsatisfactory arrangement. In "Quadragesimo Anno," Pius had favored autonomous groupings, built on a combination of capital and labor, preventing them from entering into disputes which would harm the common welfare.[86]

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[82] Charles P. Bruehl, The Pope's Plan for Social Reconstruction (New York: Devin-Adair Company, 1939), p. 225.

[83] Ibid., p. 226.

[84] Ibid., pp. 237-38.

F. Stuart Campbell agreed with Bruehl that the corporate system, as favored in the encyclical of Pius XI was to be strictly non-political, in no way based on party rule. Therefore, it was his feeling that "The Fascist state is a mere caricature of the Catholic blueprint." "Quadragesimo Anno" indicated preference for a state which would seek merely to aid the non-political corporate system.[87]

A more recent writer, Azpiazu y Zulaica agreed with the earlier commentators on this point:

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[85] Ibid., p. 264.

[86] Ibid., p. 267

[87] Francis Stuart Campbell, The Menace of the Herd (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1943), pp. 111-12.

> In the true autonomous system the state must limit itself to noting the constitution and formation of these associations or corporations, measure their scope, and make free the way of their activities. The state must consider them imperfect societies but societies capable of attaining their own ends through their own means.[88]

This, and this alone, according to this author, was what the Pope was suggesting!

The Catholic press reacted in more general terms to the issuance of the newest social encyclical, leaving more complete commentaries to the experts on such questions as corporatism. Monsignor Ryan, however, noted in 1936 that American Catholics were at least interested in the social doctrines of the Church to a much greater degree than ever before. He felt that "Rerum Novarum" had not been widely read in America, but that "Quadragesimo Anno" had brought about a greater amount of interest.[89] This might help to explain the lack of much discussion on the subject of corporatism up to this time. Ryan, two years previously, had commented at length on the features of the encyclical. He noted the point that the Pope does not over-stress individual freedom, and that to counteract this, Pius proposed that the State undertake to decentralize economic activity:

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[88] Jose Joaquin Azpiazu y Zulaica, The Corporative State, Trans. William Breanham (St. Louis: Herder, 1951), p. 106.

[89] John A. Ryan, "Significance of Encyclical's Commemoration," Catholic Action, XVIII (May, 1936), p. 4.

"He would interpose a graded hierarchical order, a system of subsidiary organizations, between the individual and the state." This would amount to a reorganization of society according to the lines of medieval guilds, with a union of occupational groups. Ryan noted that some might compare such a system to the New Deal organization, the NRA, but he felt that the NRA did not have sufficient participation by labor. Ryan said that the New Deal might succeed, but that its efforts were being hampered by vested interests of greedy individuals. He saw a middle ground emerging, between capitalism and communism, for while communism was unsatisfactory, he felt the Pope was against the principles of liberalism and individualism found in the capitalist system as well.[90]

The Catholic World saw the encyclical primarily as an attack on the evils of socialism. The editors of this monthly considered that the Pope sought solutions to the disorder rampant in the world in a return to Christian social philosophy. They affirmed that socialism was "a remedy worse than the disease." Neither socialism properly, so called, a concept far different from the Gospel teaching on society, nor its "child," communism, were reconcilable with the teachings of the Church. This, then, was the message of the Pope to the modern world.[91]

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[90] John A. Ryan, "Pope Pius XI and a New Social Order," Catholic Action, XVI (June, 1934), Pp. 14-15.

The Jesuits of America, in treating the social encyclical, were more interested in answering the charges of some members of the press in the United States. They noted that The Nation had questioned the condemnation of socialism in the encyclical, in principle, not merely in name. The Chicago Journal of Commerce claimed that the Church had no business delving into the economic field, nor was it correct in making practical application of the rules of justice to the present social order. However, America's editors felt there was every right for the Pope to act in this way. They said that it was a great advantage for the Holy Father and his advisers to stand back and look at world conditions from afar. Such an examination would allow, in fact encourage, proper solutions.[92]

Commonweal was also quick to defend the Pope and his right to speak authoritatively on the subject of human affairs. William F. Sands recognized in the text of "Quadragesimo Anno" an indication that the Pope felt modern social legislation had been forced by revolution, which was to be decried. Pius favored rather an increase in the sense of duty in government, which would recognize social evils and do what was necessary to overcome them before revolutionaries took over.[93]

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[91] "The Holy Father's Pronouncement on Labor and Capital," Catholic World, CXXXIII (June, 1931), Pp. 361-62.

[92] "The Encyclical and the Press," America, XLV (June 13, 1931), pp. 221-22.

In summary, this chapter has sought to examine some of the men who were notably vocal within the Catholic community in the 1930's, as well as to study one organization which gained notoriety during this period. The relationship of each of the individuals to Fascism or pro-Fascism is not always easy to define. Certainly Monsignor Ciarrocchi was anti-Fascist, and the general opinion, especially in the light of most of his writing, was that Monsignor John A. Ryan was likewise anti-Fascist. With regard to Father Coughlin and Edward Lodge Curran, the case is a bit different. Both have been accused of Fascist sympathies. Certainly many of the policies they advocated were held in common with the Fascisti. However, it seems that two major distinctions have to be made in coming to a final judgment of them. First of all, it must be decided whether they held certain opinions (anti-Communism,nationalism, anti-Semitism) in company with or in common with the Fascists. Not every anti-Communist was Fascist. Secondly, the question must be asked whether even their seeming sympathy with the Fascist cause, in Spain and Germany in the case of some as well as in Italy, was a matter of merely choosing between what they considered the only two possibilities for Europe--Communism or Fascism. This was a question Monsignor Ryan answered and even he favored Fascism if the dilemma were presented in an either/or proposition.

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[93] William Franklin Sands, "After Forty Years," Commonweal, XIII (September 16, 1931), p. 468.

Finally, attention has been paid to the encyclical "Quadragesimo Anno," of Pope Pius XI. It has been noted that there were some, but not many, noteworthy commentaries on the encyclical, most of them appearing after it had been in publication for a good many years. Here, it was a case of American Catholics lauding the renewal of the social order suggested by the Pope, while at the same time being careful to note that the corporatism mentioned in the encyclical was not necessarily that of Italy and was not suggested by the Pope as being universally acceptable.

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CHAPTER V

INTERNATIONAL TURMOIL, WAR AND ANTI-CATHOLIC ATTACKS PUT THE CATHOLIC POSITION IN SHARPER FOCUS

John B. Carter has stated in his doctoral dissertation that after 1932, American interest in the FAscist movement lessened. He gives as reason for this attitude three factors: after the tenth anniversary of the Fascist revolution Americans felt the government of Italy was there to stay, most of the reforms had been in effect for a while, Italy was not considered a major power, and its internal problems were not thought to be consequential on the international scene. Further, Americans by this time were distracted by more important men, who had taken over the spotlight from Mussolini: Franklin D. Roosevelt and Adolph Hitler. Finally, Americans had an internal problem of their own, for by this time the Depresseion was of such major proportions that it would overshadow anything else in the mind of most Americans.[1] As we shall see, however, events of this decade would slowly turn the attention of Americans once more upon Italy and Il Duce, for international affairs were proceeding at such a rapid rate that it was soon evident that America could not remain a disinterested spectator to the events taking place, primarily the Spanish Civil War and the Italo-Ethiopian War. Both of these caused the United States to recognize the gravity of the international situation and the role which Fascism would play in this situation. As we shall see, the Church was brought into this discussion because both Italy and Spain were considered Catholic countries. Therefore, there was some questioning, if not outright charges that the Churchmen of America held sympathy for causes which were becoming more and more unpopular in the United States. Catholics would react by defending themselves against the charges laid at their door, but during this period, they would solidify their opinions about the Fascist phenomenon across the seas. Likewise, they would enter more vocally into the American mainstream of political thought, and take up such questions as isolationism, prospects for world peace, and the attitude which should motivate American foreign policy, not only in regard to the European Fascist, Nazi, and Communist powers, but also with regard to proposed attitudes toward England, France and other allies.

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[1] John B. Carter, American Reactions to Italian Fascism, 1919-1933 (New York: Columbus University, 1954), p. 456. (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation.)

The fact that Spain controlled by Franco, and Mussolini's Italy, should be considered similar in political philosophy to the point of identification was not merely due to their basic political philosophy. They were allies as well, a fact borne out by the statement of Cattell that by April, 1937, seventy thousand men of the Italian army were stationed in Spain to bolster the cause of Franco.[2] While Germany, Italy, and Russia had signed a non-intervention pact which would have outlawed such activity, it would be advantageous for them to gain Spain as their ally, especially if world war were to come. Russia had to be more careful, because her intervention would be likely to alienate its western allies. Therefore, the Fascist powers aided Franco's nationalists, and this aid included not only armed force, but diplomatic opposition to the entry of Russia on the side of those opposing Franco.[3] Mussolini especially recognized the key position Spain held in the Mediterranean, and therefore as early as 1934, he had offered aid to the forces seeking to restore monarchy to the peninsula.[4] Therefore, it might well be asked whether the basic reason for support of Franco in Italy came from an agreement in theory with the conservative forces in Spain or from a pragmatic judgment sparked by the utilitarian motives, especially the need of a friendly neighbor to the west.

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[2] David T. Cattell, Communism and the Spanish Civil WAr (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), p. 82.

[3] Ibid., pp. 75-77.

[4] Ibid.

We have mentioned already that the Reverend Edward Lodge Curran of Brooklyn was a strong supporter of the Franco cause, and that through the pages of the Brooklyn Tablet, this cause was championed. We have also noted that the subversive agents of the Spanish Franco party, the Falange, were active in America, and were accused of a great deal of influence among American Catholics, as well as infiltration into such groups as the Christian Front. Franco support came from two American churchmen whose views otherwise were very dissimilar. Father Coughlin approved heartily of the antiCommunish features of the Franco party, and Monsignor John A. Ryan joined 174 other Catholic laymen and clergy on October 14, 1937, in defending the support the American Church was giving the insurgents in Spain. Ryan based this support, however, on the right to revolution against a government which had persecuted the Church.[5]

Meanwhile, in 1935, the forces of Italy were engaged in a campaign in Africa which would have even more effect on American opinion of the Italian government. In this case, it was no longer intervention in a civil war of another country, but an outright case of invasion. In September, 1935, Mussolini made it clear that Italy was at great odds with Ethiopia. Il Duce charged that Ethiopian forces were harassing Italian colonies of the African coast, and that for economic reasons and because of population expansion, Italy badly needed territorial expansion. Therefore, the Italian leader sought to present the issue to the world as a case of colonial expansion and defense of boundries. The situation was compounded by the appearance of the British fleet in the Mediterranean, leading Mussolini to claim that England as well was threatening the integrity of Italy.[6] The actual invasion of Ethiopia took place in November, 1935; after over a year of fighting, Italy was victorious.

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[5] Francis L. Broderick, Right Reverend New Dealer--John A. Ryan (New York: Macmillan, 1963), pp. 233-34.

Official reaction in America to the events in Africa was strongly opposed to the action of Mussolini, and President Roosevelt suggested a "moral embargo" against the belligerents, most especially against the Italian nation. While the embargo was not observed very well by many American exporters, strenuous objections were heard from the Italian government and from Italian Americans in the United States. In fact, the Italian natives in America organized a letter writing campaign which, by December, 1935, brought over 2,500 pieces of correspondence to the Department of State in Washington.[7] In January, 1936, from the 7th to the 14th, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs heard witnesses on neutrality proposals suggested by the government.

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[6] Federico Chabod, A History of Italian Fascism (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), pp. 77-78.

[7] Robert A. Divine, The Illusion of Neutrality (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 131-32.

Again the Italian-Americans were in evidence, seeking to protect the interests of their native land by employing a lobby to fight against any trade restrictions which might be leveled against Italy.[8] The committee also heard spokesmen for specific economic interests and isolationists who favored free commerce with Italy.[9] The Italian groups which favored neutrality and opposed any embargo, especially against Italy, were the American Friends of Italy, the Sons of Italy, the American-Italian Union, and the League for American Neutrality.[10] In 1936 a bill was finally passed, certainly influenced by the Italian-American lobby. It denied the President the authority to restrict trade in raw materials, and limited the use of any arms embargo.[11]

Father Coughlin in Detroit favored the position of neutrality and opposed any sanctions against Italy. He particularly opposed cooperation with England by anti-Italian legislation, feeling that it would mean that the United States would be in league with the corrupt British international bankers.[12] Coughlin was therefore considered a champion of the unpopular cause of Italy in its Ethiopian campaign.

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[8] Ibid., pp. 140-141.

[9] Ibid., pp. 146-47.

[10] Ibid., pp. 150-52.

[11] Ibid., pp. 159-60.

[12] Charles J. Tull, Father Coughlin and the New Deal (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1965), p.102.

Then Italy first showed signs that it might engage in war with Ethiopia over territorial rights and colonial expansion, Denis Gwynn, an Irish historian, wrote in Sign magazine that Italy was " . . . legitimately obliged to take strong action to protect her frontiers in Eritrea . . ." Gynn felt that should this happen, it would go much farther. He suggested that if Il Duce were victorious in Ethiopia, since he had committed his nation to a policy of colonization in Africa, we would cede more than he had already demanded. Gwynn likewise felt confident that Italy would be victorious, for he ranked Mussolini as the only European statesman capable of a war of conquest. Still, Gwynn felt that it was a matter for Italy and Ethiopia alone to discuss and that if the League of Nations was to try to settle the disagreement, Mussolini would merely withdraw from the League.[13]

Sign reported, even before the war actually broke out, that the Pope was being accused of tacit approval of the proposed acts Mussolini had planned. However, Pius XI was defended as having made it clear that a war of conquest was wrong, and that other ways must be sought to defend boundaries and to secure more territory for an expanding population. Further, it was argued that if the Pope were to become too explicit, he could be accused of meddling in politics. This was especially true if the Pope were to do anything more than enunciate general principles at a time when the League of Nations was the competent judge of such matters. Fianlly, it was noted that the Pope had never really been asked by any interested party to speak and judge the case.[14] When sanctions were voted by the League of Nations against Italy, Sign felt that the action had done a great deal to revive the image and effectiveness of the League. However, it also seemed to the editors that it was an evidence that the League was still a tool of the great powers who would only act when their own interests were threatened.[15]

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[13] Denis Gwynn, "Appeasement in Europe," Sign, XIV (April, 1935), 526-28.

Denis Gwynn wrote in Sign in November, 1935, voicing an opposition to Italy which he did not seem to have a few months previously. He called the Ethiopian War a "war for national aggrandizement," despite the League of Nations Treaty and the Kellogg Pact, which bound their signatories to renounce war of any kind. The League was the place where the affair should have been settled anyway, according to Gwynn, since there definitely seems to be a need for relocating some of the surplus Italian population. Also, the author felt that win or loose, Mussolini's acts would have an effect on international affairs by his present way. If he lost, the British and French feared that their colonies in Africa would no longer be safe, and that the whole continent would break into turmoil. However, if Italy were to win the war, Mussolini might well proceed to invade Egypt and the Sudan.[16] Gwynn wrote again in January, 1936, de= fending the official, formal silence of the Pope on the subject of the war which indicated to some either fear on the part of Pius XI, or secret approval of what was happening in Africa. After he noted the fact that many of the Italian clergy supported the war out of patriotism, but that it was the job of the Holy See to work ceaselessly for reconciliation between nations, Gwynn seemed to say that, at least indirectly, the silence of the Pope comes from fear. He stated that should the Pope denounce the war, there would no doubt be a grave conflict between Italy and the Vatican, which would not only lead to dissension and misunderstanding among Catholics in Italy, but would probably lead to the Pope once again becoming a prisoner of the Vatican, and would certainly paralyze the activities of the various Congregations of the Holy See. Further, such action might eventually lead to a failure of the Mussolini government, in which case various countries might well swoop down and divide Italy among themselves, thus making uncertain the independent status of the Holy See.[17] The Catholic Mind made a strong plea in defense of the Pope and his silence in regard to the Ethiopian War. The editors noted that when rumors of war were present as early as December, 1934, Pius spoke to the Cardinals on Christmas Eve, pleading for peace and calling war a suicidal, homicidal mania. In April, 1935, at a Consistory, the Pope stated his opposition to war as a heinous crime. Again on August 8, 1935, he noted Italy and Ethiopia were on the verge of war and again pleaded for peace. On August 27, to a group of nurses, Pius called any war of conquest unjust, and on September 7 and 26, 1935, he led prayers for peace. The editors conclude: "We submit that His Holiness has said enough, and more than enough for the present."[18]

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[14] Theophane Maguire, "The Popes and Peace," Sign XV (October, 1935), 130.

[15] "The League and Peace," Sign, XV (November, 1935), 195.

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[16] Denis Gwynn, "Italy, France and England," Sign XV (November, 1935), 210-12.

In September, 1935, Ave Maria magazine noted that both France and England were opposing an Italian takeover in Africa, but challenged them with the charge of duplicity, saying that if these two countries could take what they wanted in Africa, how could they oppose a similar action by Italy. However, the editors noted that the Pope favored peace.[19] Again the following month, the editors saw fit to defend the actions of Italy against the charges of the French and English. They accused these two countries of acting less from the altruistic motives they claimed, especially in the light of the way in which England and France divided Germany's African colonies at the end of World War I. Italy's actions were defended because of the need for colonies to meet the problem of an increasing population. In reality, France and England were seen as opposing Italy out of fear of Italian supremacy in the Mediterranean.[20]

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[17] Denis Gwynn, "Italy and the Vatican," Sign, XV (January, 1936), 332-4.

[18] "The Pope and the War," Catholic Mind, XXXIV (March 22, 1936), 133-39.

Ave Maria joined other Catholic magazines, however, in defending the Pope for not making a formal declaration of opposition to the activities of the Mussolini government at the time of the war. P. W. Browne stated that the Pope does not pass judgment on the conflict of national interests and noted that he was being called upon to speak by non-Catholics who usually are not concerned with listening to what he has to say. The author went on to question the actions of the League of Nations against Italy, since it seemed again to be a case of preservation of the interests of the great powers rather than defending the weak nations. Also, their sanctions were rather ineffective, since what was really needed was work toward political and economic justice. Finally, the peace of Versailles was seen as being designed merely to "keep the world as the war left it."[21]

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[19] "Solving the Problem," Ave Maria, XLII (New Series) (September 7, 1936), 313.

[20] "Inconsistent," Ave Maria, XLII (New Series) (October 19, 1935), 503-04.

The entrance into the publishing field of the Catholic Worker in 1934 brought to the Catholic press a vociferous cry for social justice. While such things as quality of print and paper, and occasional lapses in typography and grammar revealed the newspaper as a low-cost attempt to enunciate Christian social principles, it would still gain the attention of a great number of people. The Worker was strong in condemnation of Italy in Ethiopia, as it condemned other European nations who had "helped themselves to whatever they needed over a space of years in Africa . . . ." It was a scandal for so-called Christian nations to be involved. Italy, in her threatened war upon Ethiopia, was called an aggressor, and it was noted that in this case as well as in so many others, "Christian ideas in international relations has [sic] not yet been tried."[22] When the actual invasion took place, the Catholic Worker saw it as a case of national self-interest suffocating Christian principles, to the extent that the Ethiopian war was " . . . clearly immoral when judged by Catholic ethics." Further, the situation was considered not merely locally, but "internationally dangerous."[23]

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[21] P. W. Browne, "Pius XI and the Italo-Ethiopian Conflict," Ave Maria, XLIII (New Series) (May 2, 1936), 545-57.

An American seminarian, Henry Beck in Rome, protested by letter the Catholic Worker's anti-Italian stand in regard to the war, and this letter was published in the issue of December, 1935. He stated that the Worker was too strong--the Pope had not condemned Italy, why should an American Catholic paper? Also, the whole affair was too complex for a simple answer to be given. Beck then quotes a sixteenth-century Dominican theologian, Francisco Vittoria, who stated that a civilized nation was entitled to the goods of barbarians as common property. Also, Vittoria was cited as holding that a civilized nation might take over the reins of government of a less civilized nation. Italy, it was claimed, had ample reason to go to war--because of the Ethiopian border raids on her colonies, the overpopulation of the Italian peninsula, and the need to reestablish herself economically in Ethiopia, since her position had been weakened by the incursion of Japan. Therefore, concluded the writer from Rome, "Italy can put forward a very strong case."[24]

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[22] "Christian Nations Invites Ruin for Christendom," Catholic Worker, III (September, 1935), 1, 6.

[23] F. L. Burke, "Italy Invades Ethiopia," Catholic Worker, III (October, 1935), 1, 6.

The Catholic World continued its anti-Fascist policy in this war as well. An editorial in October, 1935, compared Mussolini to Napoleon. The editors question whether the people of Italy were as favorable toward the was as the outside world was led to believe, since press censorship in Italy woudl no doubt block any unfavorable comment. Italian theologians were challenged to give their opinions of the war, to oppose the injustice involved. However, it was feared that they would not because they were first of all Italians, "If our Catholic ethics is colored by nationalism can it still be Catholic?" This was even more true of the Italian clergy who rationalized the war by seeing it as producing a good end, the expansion of the Church in Africa. Finally, the editors felt that America should stay out of the conflict as much as possible, since the main reason for American regusal to join the League of Nations was to avoid embroilment in any corner of the world.[25]

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[24] Henry Beck, "Student in Rome Protests Stand of Catholic Worker," Catholic Worker, III (December, 1935), 4,6.

[25] "The Ambition of Mussolini," Catholic World, CXLII (October, 1935), 1-9.

In October, 1935, the Catholic World published an article by Pierre Crabites in which the Ethiopians were seen as having a "superiority complex" which led them on to war with the hope of voctory. However, it seemed that the Italian army was definitely superior, although the Ethiopians might give them a worthy battle. This would indeed have dire effects upon European affairs:

> Mussolini has worked such wonders in Italy, he knows his people so well, that I reguse to admit that pre-Fascist Italy and present-day Italy are necessarily one and the same thing. But, on the other hand, my mind stands aghast at what may happen should the Abyssinians' "superiority complex" enable Haile Selassie to prolong the contest. Should a revolution break out in Italy, Europe will indeed be in sorry straits.[26]

When the war broke out, the Catholic World bitterly protested the Italian march into Ethiopia. Those who approved it, the editors concluded, said nothing at all about justice and right. Even though Italian Catholics had remained silent on the subject, American Catholics were asked to speak out, to " . . . face the real issue: to say what is right and what is wrong in the light of moral theology."[27]

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[26] Pierre Crabites, "The Abyssinian 'Superiority Complex,'" Catholic World, CXLII (October, 1935), 10-17.

[27] "War is on, Reason is Off," Catholic World, CXLII (November, 1935), 128-39.

In December, 1935, the Catholic World noted that it had been commended by a publication of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Milwaukee, The Living Church, for its stance against the Ethiopian war. However, it asked for a repudiation of a speech allegedly given by the Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Ildefonso Schuster, who reportedly approved the war. The Catholic World answered that it could not believe the cardinal would give such a talk, although they had not seen the official text. Supposedly, the cardinal had held the war justifiable because it would bring an end to slavery in Ethiopia and advance the cause of the Church, but these are not sufficient reasons for going to war. Further, St. Thomas and St. Augustine both declared that war could only be declared when every other means to prevent it has failed. Mussolini had not taken every means.[28] Therefore, in June, 1936, when the Italian victory was assured, it was again stated that gain for the Church would not justify the war, that the sword must precede the cross.[29]

Commonweal joined the ranks of those Catholic journals opposing the war, shortly after it began. On November 8, 1935, an article by John Eppstein called the war unjust it should first have been arbitrated. The author calls the persistent refusal of certain rights to Italy a possible grievance, but a tribunal should have been used to judge the case. "The opportunity for arbitration makes the Italian incursion in Ethiopia an unjust war." Nor was it valid to claim this was impossible because the Ethiopians were barbarians.[30] The same magazine carried another article in the December 13, 1935 issue, by Pierre Crabites. The reason that this author opposed the Italo-Ethiopian War was because of the question of national sovereignty. He notes that on September 28, 1923, Ethiopia was admitted to the League of Nations, sponsored by both Italy and France. From this time on, she was to be considered part of the citadel of sovereignty. Thereafter,

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[28] "The Living Church Wants to Know," Catholic World CXLII (December, 1935), 262-64.

[29] "The Ethiopian Fiasco--and After," Catholic World CXLIII (June, 1936), 257-64.

> . . . no power in the world could validly challenge her sovereignty and her right to enjoy the privileges appertaining to the sovereignty.
>
> . . . Rome's brute aggression is but an aggravated expression of the same form of fundamental aggression as that committed by London and Paris when they failed to see that Abyssinia is now a sovereign state whose sovereignty may not validly be parcelled out into zones of influence.[31]

Commonweal too, felt the need to defend the Pope for his silence and in the January 17, 1936, issue, the editors noted especially the pleas for peace of Pius XI and of

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[30] John Eppstein, "What Serves Peace?" Commonweal, XXIII (November 8, 1935), 33-35.

[31] Pierre Crabites, "National Sovereignty," Commonweal XXIII (December 13, 1935), 173-74.

Benedict XV. Also, it was noted that in the encyclical "Pacem Dei Munus," the idea of a League of Nations was approved, even if not all its details.[32]

Even after the close of the war, there were reports that Italian troops had been involved in atrocities in Ethiopia, in retaliation for the attempt upon the life of some Italian army commanders. Right was seen as being on the side of Ethiopia, no matter their cultural or intellectual background, and the editors felt that: "The fact is that none of us can reconcile Christianity . . . with such brutality and injustice."[33]

Finally, notice should be given to an article in Commonweal in 1943, in which the author takes to task those who encouraged and approved the Italo-Ethiopian war as guilty of the results that followed:

> Just as Mussolini preceded Hitler, it was the Fascist Ethiopian war, blessed by the Italian episcopate, widely approved in Catholic circles throughout the world, which banded its spirit and its methods to Nazi warfare.[34]

The editors note at the end of the article that a clarification is necessary: Americans did not approve of the war, although the English did.

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[32] "The Pope and War," Commonweal, XXIII (January 17, 1936), 327.

[33] "With Fixed Bayonets," Commonweal, XXIV (March 12, 1937), 539.

[34] Georges Bernanos, "Notes on Fascism," Commonweal, XXXVII (March 19 and 26, April 2, 1943), 534-6, 560-2, 587-8.

In September, 1935, America felt it necessary to defend the Pope from the charge of silent approval of the war that was about to break out. The editors saw the Pope in a dilemma: should he speak, whole nations might defect from Catholic ranks; should he remain silent, he may be accused of cringing before threatened reprisals. They note the same addresses, however, which Catholic Mind had quoted, and come to the conclusion that the Pope had given sufficient principles for Italians to form their consciences, which principles seem to indicate opposition to war. It was up to the Italian people to judge.[35] In the same issue, America quoted an article from Month " . . . to see how the crisis is viewed in Catholic circles abroad." The conclusions of the article were that no theologian could justify Italy's actions against Ethiopia. Also, it was noted that FAscism was fundamentally incompatible with Catholic Faith, and that there was evidence that this war was the action of the government, while the majority of the people could only sit in compulsory silence. After this, America returned to its policy of merely reporting, without comment, activities in Italy.

The diocesan press, in some areas, was a little more vocal on this issue, and a little more ready to take sides, primarily, it would seem, because of the call by so many to defend the actions of the Fascist government and/or the silence of the Pope. However, many diocesan newspapers ignored the war, for example, in October, 1935, The New World, Chicago's archdiocesan newspaper, noted in an editorial that the Ethiopian War caused a sense of fear throughout the world. However, the editors were not about to condemn the actions of the Italian State. The editors admitted that the necessary postulates for a just war are almost impossible to fulfill. However, this did not mean that the Italians should suffer automatic condemnation. As a matter of fact, it was felt that condemnation of Italy was unfair, since it was impossible to deny there were "some claims for their adventure."[36]

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[35] "The Pope and Ethiopia," America, LIII (September 7, 1935), 506.

The Pilot, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Boston, refused to comment on the morality of the war in Ethiopia, but chose rather to defend the Pope. The editors noted that the Pope had often made pleas "for his intentions" and this was taken as a sign of his concern for peace in the world. The fact that he had not definitely spoken to the problem of Ethiopia was admitted, but the Pilot felt that the Holy Father had his own good reasons for such silence:

> There have been requests, there have been insolent demands, that Our Holy Father should take an aggressive, overt stand. Some want an affirmative statement because they sincerely believe that the enormous prestige of the Papacy might turn the scales to the

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[36] "INcentives to War," The New World, (October 25, 1935).

> side of peace. But surely the Sovereign Pontiff knows better than any pacifist zealot the wiser policy in this case.[37]

Not only was his silence defended, but the opportunity was taken to answer anti-Catholic critics of the Holy See: " . . . nations welcome the mediation of the Papacy only when that mediation is employed on their sides."

In Baltimore, The Catholic Review assumed a stronger anti-war stance. In the issue of September 6, 1935, the Review noted favorably the statement passed by the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States in a meeting in Washington, D.C., earlier that week:

> Among the resolutions adopted at the closing session of the convention was one regretting the attitude of the Italian government toward "the semi-defenseless Ethiopian people," and expressing the feeling that "the imperialistic desires of the Italian government against Ethiopia" will react unfavorably against the work of the Catholic Church among the dark peoples of the workd.[38]

Two weeks later, the editors of the same paper stated in an editorial their feelings on the war. They noted that the world was decrying the invasion of Ethiopia. They felt that one of the detrimental effects of the invasion was the loss of life on both sides, but that the highest price being paid was that Mussolini was forgetting God, a fault evident in the actions of many dictators, and examplified most especially in the lack of mention of God in the Versailles Peace Treaty.[39] Therefore, not only was Mussolini to be blamed, but the general world attitude of Godlessness was condemned and the Ethiopian war was seen as the most recent example of it.

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[37] "Pope Pius' Request," The Pilot, (November 9, 1935).

[38] "Italy's Desire for Ethiopia is Condemend," The Baltimore Catholic Review, (September 6, 1935).

The New York archdiocesan newspaper, The Catholic News, reacted to the pressure of world condemnation of the Italian invasion, with counter-charges against Italy's detractors. It was noted that the British opposed the Italian action, but this wasamazing since they often committed acts of aggression in India, Egypt, and South Africa. The Soviets, too, were opposed to Italy and had asked the League of Nations to intervene, and yet this was the same Soviet government which had broken " . . . every compact with God and man when it served its purpose. . . " Not only this, but groups such as the Methodists, called for the Holy Father to intervene to stop Italy, and yet these were the same people who had so often complained that the Vatican was interfering too much in State affairs. The hope was expressed, however, that the pleas for world peace from the Holy Father would be accepted, lest the conflict grow into another European war. Although their voices were usually ignored, it was felt by the CAtholic News that "The Popes have always been firends of world peace."[40] Again in October, the New York paper noted that the Holy See was on the side of peace, and many times had spoken in its favor. Therefore, the critics of the silence from Rome were answered:

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[39] "The World Gone Mad," The Baltimore Catholic Review (September 20, 1935).

> . . . there is no valid reason why the Holy Father should follow the advice of one advocate of peace by insisting that Mussolini must withdraw his troops from Ethiopia . . . it is not the provice of the head of the Catholic Church.[41]

In September, 1935, the Davenport, Iowa, Catholic newspaper, the Catholic Messenger, saw the conflict over Ethiopia as definitely a threat to the world. The editors felt that all of Europe was taking the occasion to mobilize its troops, since they considered the activities in Ethiopia and in the Mediterranean as a threat to their own special interests. The suggestion was made that the Pope be called upon to stop this dangerous tendency, since he alone might be able to make an agreeable settlement which all sides might accept, even Mussolini, who " . . . knows the Pope can make a just and peaceful settlement of controversy between Italy and Ethiopia."[42]

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[40] "Hypocrisy and Inconsistency," The Catholic News (September 21, 1935).

[41] "The Popes and Peace," The Catholic News, (October 19, 1935).

[42] "A Way Out," The Catholic Messenger, (September, 1935).

An indication of how popular sentiment was running in Davenport in the light of the Italo-Ethiopian crisis is seen from a report of the annual stage production of the Cathedral parish in Davenport, where " . . . Art Kropparch, alderman of the Fifth Ward of the city . . . (will) entertain patrons of the second annual minstrel show at Sacred Heart Auditorium with his droll, humorous remarks as "Sticky Molassie, Emperor of Ethiopia."[43] Certainly the "Lion of Juda" could not expect a very favorable following from those gathered for this performance!

It would seem that the majority of writers on the Ethiopian war in American Catholic periodicals stayed away from any consideration of religious motives or justification of the event. If such was suggested, moral principles were usually brought forth to answer opposition to the war. This is not to say that Catholics in America favored the war. Many did not, and said so, but most said nothing. There was still a certain feeling of identification with the Italians because of the number of Catholics in Italy, and also, no doubt, because the Pope was not considered to have spoken so definitively as to allow for no doubt on the question. The Catholic press, it seems, distinguished itself by the fact that it tried very hard to face the issue on the grounds which were taken by other thinking men: national sovereignty, international justice, and world wide effect. However, some did defend the silence of the Holy Father, while others denied it, and a few proposed justification for Italy's invasion. Further, there were a few who felt that the Holy Father should be called upon to act as mediator in this dispute, no doubt hoping that through this, peace might be restored and the threat of military expansion might be averted.

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[43] "Cathedral Minstrel," The Catholic Messenger, (October 31, 1935).

Catholics Defend Themselves

During the 1930's, sometimes sparked by events in Italy, at other times because of anti-Catholic prejudice, some opposition was voiced toward the Catholics of America by individual writers. Those evoked, quite naturally, response from the defenders of the faith in the various American Catholic periodicals.

The Christian Century, for example, carried a number of articles on the relationship between CAtholicism and Fascism. In 1932, an article was printed which accused Fascism of regarding itself as a religion, which it was trying to indoctrinate into the youth of the Italian nation. Actually, the author felt that FAscist doctrine indicated a double standard--the State was considered as a god, but "Italian" Catholicism was also recognized. The Fascist government gave the Church a favored position in Italy, and for this reason, it seemed that the Church had to compromise its principles, to keep this favoritism alive. An example of this adaptation to Fascist philosophy was seen in the national origins of the Roman Curia. The author felt that because of the extremely nationalistic position of the Fascist state, the Pope would not begin to de-italianize this central body. Still, the two elements--Fascist government and the Vatican--were strong in themselves, and it would appear that the only result would be an eventual clash between these great powers.[44]

The Christian Century, however, was not completely anti-Catholic when it studied the Fascist phenomenon. In September, 1935, when the Ethiopian war seemed inevitable, the magazine wrote sympathetically of the position in which the Pope found himself. They noted that the Pope faced the situation with a gun too big to use--the country of Italy, its government and military, were made up of Catholics. However, should Pius XI disavow the proposed war in a strong manner, he might find these Catholics would be alienated from the Church, or that he himself would once more become a prisoner of the Vatican. He was given credit for having spoken out against war of aggression, and could be clearly seen as questioning the justice of the proposed action of the Italian armies. In fact, the Fascists took the statement in this way, for the editors noted that the speech was censored by the Fascist press, and only found its way to the printed page in the European edition of "Osservatore Romano." The magazine did suggest that Pius, should he want to condemn the war or government policy in general, might attempt to have his message brought to the world, including Italy, through the medium of Vatican radio.[45]

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[44] W. A. Visser't Hooft, "Is Fascism a Religion?" Christian Century, XLIX (December 28, 1932), 1602-04.

In 1936, however, an article by the ex-Jesuit, E. Boyd Barrett, indicated that the Christian Century was not ignorant of the charges made by some that the Church and Fascism were allied, and that there might be some truth to the charge. Barrett noted first that there was some indication that a softening of Communish doctrine was causing a re-evaluation of Communism on the part of Catholics. Fulton Sheen, for example, was supposed to have stated that the Church should take and use what was good in Communist social doctrine. The author then claimed a certain sympathy in the Church of Rome for Fascism:

> The Church has accepted Fascism and lives in peace with it in Italy, even though like Communism, it implies regimentation, militarism, inquisitorial censorship and that form of exploitation of labor which in Russia is called Stakhanovian.[46]

Two months later, the same magazine, on its editorial pages, noted the report that Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli was supposed to make America one of the stops on an imminent vacation trip. The Christian Century felt that Pacelli, who would be in the company of the new Italian Ambassador, Fulvio Suvich, would visit America to attempt to enlist the United States in the anti-Communist crusade of Pius XI. The editors felt that Communism was not the worst evil in the world, but that the Catholic Church was so strongly opposed to it because it was an attack on religious faith and the power and prestige of the Church. Christian Century opposed any agreement between the Vatican and Rome, since the dangers of Communism were not so grave as to warrant " . . . joining hands with an ally who sees communism as a peril but who is complacent toward Fascism and cooperative with it."[47] The following issue made a similar charge, seeing the mutual bond between the Fascist government in Italy and the Church in Rome. Ignaz O'Brien wrote that Mussolini needed Church support and the Church needed the arm of the government to preclude a Soviet takeover. This was not surprising, however, for O'Brien concluded: "In the realm of European politics, it is not difficult for Mussolini and the Vatican to work together, since both have largely the same arms, although the motives may not always coincide."[48] Therefore, we can see that the Christian Century tried to adopt a middle-of-the-road policy toward Fascism, printing articles from many angles. While they were not always answered directly, the editors of this magazine would see the points they brought up covered in many a future article and editorial in Catholic periodicals.

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[45] "The Pope Speaks: Ca He Be Muffled?" Christian Century, LII (September 11, 1935), 1131-32.

[46] E. Boyd Barrett, "Communism and the Catholic Church," Christian Century, LIII (August 12, 1936), 1083-86.

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[47] "Cardinal Pacelli's Vacation," Christian Century, LIII (October 14, 1936), 1352-54.

Other American magazines took occasional opportunities to oppose the Roman Church within the context of opposition to Fascism. For example, on January 3, 1938, Life magazine took the opportunity of a consistory in Rome to note the preponderance of Italian influence within the Catholic Church: "The College (of Cardinals) now has 39 Italians to represent Italy's 4,700,000 Catholics, 30 others to represent the 331,500,000 Catholics." (The January 24 issue corrected these figures--the thirty-nine Italian Cardinals represented 43,117,000 Catholics in a total population in Italy of 43,286,000.) However, the main source of opposition by CAtholics was found in this statement: "(Pius XI) believes that the world is in a struggle between Communism and Fascism and he favors Fascism."[49] Life printed a letter of protest in the January 24, 1938 issue, from William F. Montavor of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. Montavon claimed that the Church prefers no one form of government, that it has, through Pius XI especially, spoken against Nazi Germany and against the philosophy of the Corporate State.[50] *America* carried an editorial shortly after the appearance of the accusation in *Life*. The editors called the statement "a plain lie," since Pius did not and does not favor Fascism. They too noted that the Catholic Church encouraged no particular form of government, but attempts to make peace with any government as long as it protects the rights of God, the Church, and the individual. They felt strongly that it should be made clear "that Fascism, properly understood, violates these rights beyond question." The Church, they admitted, must sometimes tolerate the lesser of two evils, and in Italy, a *modus vivendi* was achieved with Fascism because the alternative was Communism.[51] *Life*, however, never retracted its accusation nor explained its position more clearly.

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[48] Ignaz O'Brien, "The Catholic State in Europe's Crisis," Christian Century, LIII (October 21, 1936), 1386-88.

[49] "Pope Pius Creates Five New Princes of the Church," Life, Vol. IV, No. 1 (January 3, 1938), p. 55.

Another magazine, the *New Republic*, likewise took up anti-Catholic denunciations of Fascism in Italy and America. In May, 1938, Lewis Mumford wrote for this weekly, claiming that Fascism and its sympathizers represented a real danger to the United States. Allied to this group, according to Mumford, were the members of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church in America. They, he felt, posed the greatest threat, since most American Catholic laymen were loyal to the institutions of their country. Again, the question of Communism was brought up, a "fictitious threat" according to Mumford, used by the priesthood to support war on popular government. This, he claimed, was a ridiculous position in an "overwhelmingly unbolshevik country like ours." Mumford felt it was important for the American nation to declare non-involvement with Fascism, thereby making it easier "to maintain their precious Protestant tradition of religious tolerance." If this took place, it would be good for the CAtholic Church in America to adopt support of such a plan.[52]

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[50] "Letters to the Editor," *Life*, Vol. IV, No. 4 (January 24, 1938), p. 11.

[51] "The Pope and Fascism," *America*, LVIII (January 15, 1938), 348-49.

Michael William accepted the challenge from the New Republic, and in the June 3, 1938, issue of Commonweal, answered Mumford's charges. Williams claimed that for two thousand years, the Church had opposed all forms of tyranny in whatever country, in the garb of whatever form of government. He admitted that sometimes it had to submit to a prevailing power in a particular country, even when that power was tyrannical, but he defended the Church by noting that any such arrangement never degenerated into an alliance. Such was the case in Italy, as in any other country which, the Church might recognize for political reasons.[53] Commonweal had taken much the same editorial policy over a year previously, when it answered the charges made by Reinhold Niebuhr in a speech near to that time. Niebuhr had claimed that the Church was in alliance with Fascism primarily because both were rooted in feudalism. The editors of Commonweal, however, noted that Catholicism had been a major force in the world both before and after the feudal period, that it always acted purely within its own sphere, and therefore over and above particular forms of govennment. Further, it was noted that no matter in what form of government it found itself, the Church survived them all.[54]

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[52] Lewis Mumford, "A CAll to Arms," New Republic, LXXXXV (May 18, 1938), 39-42.

One of the most outspoken American opponents of Fascism was the correspondent, George Seldes. He was also of the opinion that the Catholic Church was at least in sympathy, if not in league, with the Mussolini government. Seldes lived in Rome as a newspaperman during the earlier years of the Fascist regime. However, in July, 1925, he sent a revealing story of the Matteotti murder and its consequences in Italy. The telegram was received by the Chicago Tribune, for which Seldes was employed, and this newspaper published the story without the regular censorship which had been decreed by the Fascist government, but which Seldes had somehow been able to avoid. When the Italians learned of what had happened, Seldes was declared a persona non grata in Italy and asked to leave the country. Thereafter, his anti-Fascism was even more pronounced.[55] In 1938, Seldes was involved in a literary controversy with a number of Catholics on the subject of Fascism and the Church, particularly the Church in America.

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[53] Michael Williams, "Mumford's Call to Arms," Commonweal, XXVIII (June 3, 1938), 157.

[54] "The Policy of Catholicism," Commonweal, XXV (February 12, 1937), 425-26.

The controversy began with an article in Commonweal for September 2, 1938. James A. Magner wrote in defense of American Catholics who had been accused by many of favoring Fascism. This charge was based on the principle that the Church is authoritarian, and therefore much like the Fascist state. However, Magner maintained that this was not a correct conclusion. The power and authority of the Church comes to it from above, but the Church has been and always will be the foe of despotism in government, especially state absolutism. The Church, therefore, was particularly opposed to the totalitarian state in principle and the nationalizing of religion in specific cases. Magner noted that the Church deals with all governments on the level of diplomacy, but still in a realistic way, "just as Christ consorted with sinners." The fact that the Church has recognized a certain government is a *de facto* situation which does not necessarily include a judgment of righteousness. With regard to Fascism, Magner was strong in defense of the Pope. He said that if Pius XI had condemned the Ethiopian war, he would thereby enter into a position in which he would have to take a stand on all extra-territorial possessions of countries, even those of the United States. Further, Fascism was never condemned by the Holy Father because it was not, like Communism, atheistic, and was too broad a political subject to be judged. However, the Church had strongly condemned statolatry, a major factor it would seem, in Fascist doctrine. Finally, Magner, accused critics of Catholics for being inconsistent--that they opposed a course of events in Germany, but approved a similar situation in Spain. For him, the Hitler and Franco rise to power were too similar to be separated, although there were some who would do so.[56]

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[55] Carter, p. 380.

Two months later, George Seldes answered Magner in the magazine *New Republic*. He noted that the priest had denied any connection between Fascism and Catholicism, but felt that in Spain and Italy, it was easy to see that there was a connection. Seldes accused the Church of favoring Franco in Spain mainly because Franco favored the Church. In Italy, although the Fascist state and educational policies were the antithesis of Catholic principles, the failure of the Pope to condemn the Ethiopian war gave indication of where he really stood. Seldes felt that the reason behind this was the anti-Communish feelings of the Church, epitomized by the reigning Holy Father: "Pius XI is also the prisoner of a twenty-year-old complex about bolshevism." Seldes went on to say that ever since the "Americanism" controversy in the United States late in the nineteenth century, little serious thought developed here, and the end result was an adoption of any and all Roman policies. In this case, it meant that the American Church adopted the current pro-Fascist doctrine of Rome, and Seldes challenged the Church to replace this policy with militant democracy.[57]

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[56] James A. Magner, "The Church and Fascism," *Commonweal* XXVIII (September 2, 1938), 462-64.

The Seldes article did not go unanswered, and on November 18, 1938, Commonweal carried an article in rebuttal, by Michael Williams. Williams claimed that the Church was being opposed for its anti-Communist position, that some liberals, particularly at the editorial offices of the New Republic, were saying that anti-Stalin Communism was anti-democratic, and that therefore, the Church is undemocratic and in league with Fascism. Williams went on to answer the further charge that because of concordats with Italy and Germany, the Church was accused of being in league with Hitler and Mussolini. He defended the actions of the Church on the grounds that these were not in the form of an alliance, but merely an assurance of peaceful co-existence, so that the Church could teach the religion of Christ unhampered by government interference. The Church wanted nothing more or less in these two cases than assurance of protection for minimum rights, rights which were denied her in Communist countries. The Church, therefore, was described by Williams as seeking nothing more than her own best interest, and certainly not of attempting to enter into the political sphere. Therefore, "It tolerates Fascism, because Fascism tolerates the Church, in Italy." However, should matters change and the Fascist government follow the principles it advocated to their logical conclusion, the Church would oppose it.[58]

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[57] George Seldes, "Catholics and Fascists," New Republic LXXXXVII (November 9, 1938), 6-9.

James A. Magner himself felt it necessary to defend his article against the attacks of Seldes, and on April 29, 1939, another article appeared under his name in Ave Maria. He states that it is a primary principle to be kept in mind that any government which subordinates the individual entirely to the state is in conflict with acknowledged CAtholic principles. Further, he felt that recent Popes had, as a matter of fact, made many statements strongly upholding democratic principles. He notes the omission on the part of Seldes to state the fact that the Church had, as a matter of fact, strongly opposed Nazi Fascism and its resultant persecution, seeming to indicate opposition to all forms of Fascism. In regard to the Ethiopian war, he saw the Italian bishops who blessed the war more as patriots than churchmen, and that it was in their capacity as citizens of Italy that they wished well to the case of expansion and defense. The Pope did not intervene in this struggle because at no time were the rights of the Church jeopardized, therefore, he had no reason to speak. As a further defense of the position of the Church in regard to Fascist governments, Magner compared the Franco revolution in Spain to the American revolution.[59] Magner began the article by denying the premise of Seldes that the Church was opportunistic in dealing with the Fascism problem. However, it would seem that he almost proves the Seldes argument with his acknowledgment of Papal silence and episcopal support.

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[58] Michael Williams, "George Seldes on CAtholics and Fascists," Commonweal, XXIX (November 18, 1938), 99-100.

Seldes did not consider that he had been answered well by any of the articles which appeared after his attack in the New Republic. Therefore, in 1939, he published a book called The Catholic Crisis. Seldes accused Catholics of seeing the turmoil in the present-day world as a case of inevitable war between Communism and Fascism, whereas it was actually a war between FAscism and Democracy, in which case the option the Church has chosen, FAscism, was more damning. This choice was made by the Pope, said Seldes, for Pius felt constrained by political affairs in Italy to avoid opposition to the government of a neighboring country to the Vatican, which country included such a large number of Catholics. Pius XI, Seldes felt, acted out of deference to the safety of the Catholics in Italy. The problem is compounded for American Catholics, however, for they must make the choice of support of the principles of American democracy upon which their country stands, or listen to the reactionary statements of the pro-Fascist Roman element in the Church, in Italy.[60] Seldes noted that the stance of nine cardinals and seventy-nine bishops in Italy, supporting the Ethiopian war, was sufficient indication of the feeling in Catholic Italy.[61] Therefore, Seldes continued to hold the position that the official Church was pro-Fascist, that American CAtholics agreed with this Roman position, and that it was up to them to repudiate such a position and return to the support of American values. As we shall see, while Seldes may not have been answered directly, many Catholic authors of the period answered this charge, a charge alleged by authors other than Seldes as well.

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[59] James A. Magner, "Mr. Seldes and Fascism," _Ave Maria_ XLIX (New Series) (April 29, 1939), 513-17.

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[60] George Seldes, The Catholic Crisis (New York: Julian Messner, 1945). (N.B. This is the second edition of the work which originally appeared in 1939.)

[61] Ibid., p. 262.

A later writer, Richard Webster, described the actual condition in Italy as a case of cooperation between Mussolini and the Church until 1938. At that time, in his opinion, the Vatican succeeded in disengaging itself from the regime, particularly because the Fascisti were becoming more and more enamoured of German National Socialism.[62] C. J. Eustace, a Catholic, suggested that previously to this, there was definitely a link between the two, that relations were generally cordial between Mussolini and the Vatican, especially since Il Duce had solidified the place of religion in the lives of the Italian people. Also, Mussolini opposed Liberalism, in line with the position of the Church, since it was based on secularist or humanitarian ideals, and spread through Masonic lodges. Eustace claimed, therefore,that Fascism was especially the target of abuse from the Masons and disgruntled liberals.[63] Eustace felt that there were certain good points to Fascism, at least when he wrote in 1938. He saw much outside the scope of government interference, especially the encouragement of family life, private schools, and private enterprise. Likewise, the economic condition of Italy had improved, and public morals had to be investigated under the Fascist stress on law and order. Further, he felt that compared to the dictatorships in Germany and Russia, the individual in Italy was happier and better assured of his rights.[64] Still, he admitted the dangers of the system:

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[62] Richard A. Webster, The Cross and the FAsces (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp. 113-114.

[63] C. J. Eustace, Catholicism, Communism and Dictatorship (New York: Benziger, 1938), p. 78.

> A dictatorship as such may be necessary and even beneficial. If it becomes absolute, a dangerous principle is involved. The dangers in Fascism lie in its close personal assimilation to the will of one man--Mussolini.[65]

A further danger in Italy was the fact that such a close identification between two authoritarian societies could work to secularize or socialize the Church. However, the Church certainly was receiving benefits in the interim.[66]

William Agar, a Catholic, in 1941, looked upon the Church and the FAscist experience of the past decade, and expressed concern for the fate of the Church. He stated that the Church, " . . . must now echo the dictators or be almost silent. And this will be the fate of our Church in all Europe if this war results in a Latin bloc under Mussolini," A further caveat was issued against the complacent:

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[64] Ibid., p. 81

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., pp. 85-86.

> We must not be misled into thinking that we can profit ultimately by concordats with the totalitarian states. They have not worked. They were not designed to work by the totalitarian leaders who signed them.[67]

We turn now to a consideration of the major Catholic periodicals in the latter part of the 1930's, and their position in reagrd to Fascism in general, as well as their reaction to the feeling, as already evidenced in some quarters, that the Catholic Church and Fascism were to be identified.

America magazine continued some support of the governmental policy in Italy, when, in April, 1936, "The Pilgrim" gave credit to the Corporate State for all that had been accomplished for the good of Italy. Certainly, there were some drawbacks to Fascist policy, but the Holy Father had noted these, when he opposed the interference of the government with individual liberties and the excessive bureaucracy of the Fascist system. Still, the author felt that while there was danger in the Fascist system that a particular political regime would subordinate the economic order to its own party goals, there was an existing evil in the capitalistic system, whereby the economic order was subordinated to the "aggrandizement of private individuals."[68]

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[67] William Agar, Where Do Catholics Stand? (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1941), pp. 28-29.

[68] "With Scrip and Staff," America, LIV (April 4, 1936), 620.

In the same review, in October, 1936, John LaFarge wished to make clear the distinction between European, Italian Fascism and the Fascism which was suggested as growing in America. Communism was the greatest danger to America, as LaFArge saw it, but what he wanted to make clear is that those qualities such as violence, economic reaction, the totalitarian state, etc., were as much at home in Communism as in Fascism, and that it would be these elements which the United States must be careful to recognize and avoid. As a matter of fact, he saw government centralization, the growth of violence and economic power in the hands of a few already present in America.[69]

More than a year later, America carried an article by Gault Macgowan, in which it was stated that anti-Fascism seemed to be pro-Communism: "Our sympathy is being enlisted against War and Fascism to make the world safe for Communism and Revolution." In reaction to the abuses of the Mussolini regime, too many people in America were reacting to the point that they described Russia as a country devoted to democracy and peace.[70]

The Jesuit review was called to task in June, 1937, by "A Student," who felt they should be stronger in their opposition to the FAscist government of Italy. The writer stated that the only reason the Church was being tolerated in Italy was because it served the government by providing a unifying force. Fascism, as a matter of fact, was basically hostile to the Church because: " . . . it teaches a philosophy of society and government contrary to Catholic teaching on the rights of man as an individual with a supernatural destiny."[71]

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[69] John LaFArge, "Fascism or Communism: Which the Greater DAnger?" America, LVI (October 10, 1936), 4-5.

[70] Gault Macgowan, "Fascism is the Target of Communist Artillery," America, LVIII (December 18, 1937), 244-45.

In March of 1937, Louis Minsky wished to make clear an elementary distinction. He felt it necessary to answer those who charged there were but two choices in the world--Fascism and Communism. Catholics were guilty of this to a certain extent by opposing Communism so much that the only alternative they seem to leave for themselves is FAscism. On the other hand, Jews and Protestants termed Fascism the graver menace. Minsky felt that the issue of the day was between democracy and totalitarianism of whatever kind, either right or left, and that it was unfair for certain authors to equate the Russian system with the democratic process, thereby saying a foe of Communism was a foe of democracy.[72]

John LaFarge entered the pages of America again in April, 1938, in which he explained his preference for

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[71] "Epilogue," America, LVII (June 19, 1937), 257-58.

[72] Louis Minsky, "You're a FAscist! And You're a Communist!" America, LVI (March 27, 1937), 581-82.

Christian democracy, "a society in which the God-given dignity and destiny of the human person is fully recognized, in laws, government, institutions and human conduct." He faulted FAscism for failing to distinguish society from the state, a failure which it inherited from Socialism, although he felt that only Christian philosophy could properly make that distinction. However, he also felt that most of the anti-Fascist propaganda of the day missed this point entirely, and concentrated instead upon violence, deceit, and government tyranny.[73] The editors of America again felt it necessary to summarize the American concept of the term "Fascist." They said that it was used as a work of opprobrium, to describe anyone favoring authority, wealth, law and order or violence, in short, " . . . anyone who does not accept the Marxist concept of government and society." However, the editors held that no American could truly be a FAscist because it negates all the principles of American Democracy. Nor could a CAtholic be a true Fascist, because of the totalitarian denial by the Fascists of human and spiritual values outside of the context of the state. The editors felt that there were, then, few FAscists in the United States, although the Communists claimed there were many, for they gave this label to "all with whom they disagree, that means, all authentic Americas."[74]

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[73] John LaFArge, "Answer to Anti-Fascism," America LVIII (April 2, 1938), 611.

There was still sympathy for those who held an "either-or" choice necessary between Communism and FAscism, as evidenced by an editorial in America in October, 1938. At this time, the editors felt that Catholics rejected both Communism and FAscism, but with one reservation: "Hence, while no Catholic, no American, can accept the basic philosophy of either Fascism or Communism, he can, should a coan, should a choice be forced upon him, tolerate Fascism as the lesser of two evils."[75]

A few of the "correspondence" sections of America indicate also the trend of American Catholic thought in the late 1930's. In December, 1938, John J. Shea wrote to say that FAscism was ten times more dangerous than Communism, and that under the masquerade of anti-Communish, Fascism is able to propagate anti-Semitism, anti-labor ideals, anti-Catholicism, and the extreme examples of patriotism for the sake of national unity.[76] David Gordon answered this charge with a letter published in the issue printed two weeks later. He stated that Communism was a far greater menace, as is evidenced by the fact that while it was condemned by the Pope, Pius once called the Fascist leader, "uomo providentissimo," for restoring the crucifix to the classrooms of Italy. He felt further, that "Mussolini's Italy is today the best governed large nation in the world," and that a Catholic could logically hold this andnnot be at odds with the Pope.[77]

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[75] "Calling the Kettle Black," America, LIX (October 8, 1938), 12-13.

[76] John J. Shea, "Anti-Fascist Appeal," America, LX (December 10, 1938), 233.

Wilfrid Parsons, S.J., was enlisted by the editors of Commonweal, in early 1937, to write about the FAscist-Communist conflict in the world. He noted that in Europe, there was a crystallization of thought to the point where a dichotomy was set up, allowing only a choice between the two. This carried over to America, in which the slogan was growing that we should unite in alliance with Communism to fight Fascism, the enemy of Democracy.[78] Parsons felt, however, that this was unrealistic, that in actuality, both Communism and Fascism were evils, opposed on both political and economic grounds in the name of democracy. He felt that the Popular Front, set up in America by the Communist International organization, was responsible for this false dichotomy, and that Catholics should not be fooled into weakening and accepting the Communist horn of the dilemma. Rather, all

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[77] David Gordon, "Onions," America, LX (December 24, 1938), 281.

[78] Wilfrid Parsons, "Fascist-Communish Dilemma," Commonweal XXV (February 12, 1937), 429-31.

Americans were called upon to see the true alternatives: democracy as against all forms of totalitarianism.[79]

Commonweal also enlisted the talents of the exiled head of the Popular Party in Italy, Don Luigi Sturzo, who wrote on the subject of Fascism and Communism in April, 1937. Sturzo claimed that the two were too similar to be polarized: both were dictatorships, military in orientation, favoring the abolition of liberties and the one-party system. The one major difference was that Fascism still allowed for the holding of private property. Both, however, were against the principles of Western democracy.[80] John A. O'Brien likewise took this position in a series of three articles for Commonweal in May and June, 1937. He said that just because the Church rejects Communism does not mean that it thereby embraces Nazism and Fascism. Both, he felt " . . . are expressions of the same fundamental philosophy--the absolute supremacy of the State over the political, social, economic, cultural and religious life of the individual." Fascism under Mussolini, it was true, favored religion, at least the Catholic Faith, but it still tried to dominate the young and claim a prior allegiance of the people. American CAtholics were defended as desiring " . . . continued perfection of the democratic ideal to which we in America are committed." The best defense against Communism, then, was not Fascism, but the removal of abuses upon which it thrives, especially by implementation of the social encyclicals. The alternative to this implementation would be the persecution of the Church for its wealth, as already had taken place in Mexico, Spain, and elsewhere.[81]

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[79] Wilfrid Parsons, "Popular Front and Catholicism," Commonweal, XXV (February 19, 1937), 464-66.

[80] Luigi Sturzo, "Communism, Fascism," Commonweal, XXV (April 16, 1937), 686-88.

Another Italian expatriate, Carlo Sforza, wrote in Commonweal to explain the reason behind the success of the Fascist revolution. He felt that anti-Communism was not the reason, but saw Italy as:

> A nation where there are parties, where there are political struggles, is a nation who has still the chance to be able to think, to decide, to improve. The unanimities of drunken crowds, or of terrorized crowds, prepare the intellectual and moral decadence of a nation; and--willingly or unwillingly--the worst of all horrors: war.[82]

By September, 1938, Michael Williams could write for Commonweal and explain that he felt the underlying cause of Church-State conflict in Italy to be exaggerated nationalism. This was even more clearly seen in the light of the alliance Italy was solidifying with Germany, and the adoption of the German racist policies.[83]

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[81] John A. O'Brien, "Fighting for Social Justice," Commonweal, XXVI (May 28, June 4 and 11, 1937), 117-18, 148-50, 179-80.

[82] Carlo Sforza, "Italy's Choice," Commonweal, XXVII (April, 1938), 629-30.

[83] Michael Williams, "Views and Reviews," Commonweal XXVIII (September 2, 1938), 473.

The publication Ave Maria spoke of Fascism in a more conciliatory tone, and saw a great deal of hope for the final outcome in Italy. Stanley B. James wrote in 1933 that history has shown that man comes to God through the cities he, as man, has built. He gives as an example the Roman Empire, which in a real sense served to pave the way for the Christian experience of the spread of the Faith. In a sense, he sees Fascism as the creation of the Catholic spirit of the Italian people, and that the philosophy of Fascism is unconsciously at least a political expression of the principles laid down in the social encyclicals "Rerum Novarum" and "Quadragesimo Anno." Therefore, Fascism emanates from the religion of the country and leads its adherents back to God, and therefore is in the process of becoming orthodox.[84] In 1938, the same magazine published an article by Christopher Hollis, which admitted there were some debatable policies of the Mussolini government, but said that if we concentrate on details, we cannot see the forest for the trees. He gave Il Duce credit for trying to produce a society " . . . which in all its arrangements, economic and otherwise, will satisfy the nature of man." Fascism is contrasted with Communism in that Fascism defends loyalty to the nation while Communism, as expressed by Lenin, opposed patriotism and encouraged refusal to serve countries. Fascism was also contrasted with Nazism in that the Italian phenomenon was based on tradition, firm tradition at that. At any rate, Mussolini is given credit for making the people of Northern Europe respect the people of the South, primarily by teaching his own people good sense and manners.[85]

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[84] Stanley B. James, "From Caesar to God," Ave Maria XXXVII (New Series) (June 3, 1933), 673-76.

A further indication of the approval Ave Maria had for Fascist political policy is seen during 1938, at a time when there was rumor that a revolution in Mexico would bring to power a Fascist-type government. The magazine approved of any government which was anit-Communist, since the present government in Mexico was felt to be " . . . the most Communistic government this side of Russia." A Fascist government would be preferable, however:

> If the Fascist dictatorship should follow the lines reasonable to expect from its leaders, it probably would be a government more representative of the majority of the people than any Mexico has seen since the idealistic days of Madero in 1922.[86]

The Catholic Mind set its position clearly in focus with an article by Bernard Goode in 1939. At this time, the author sought to answer those who still were saying the struggle in the world was between Fascism and Communism.

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[85] Christopher Hollis, "Mussolini and His Italy," Ave Maria, XLVII (New SEries) (January 22, 1938), 97-99.

[86] Walter M. Langford, "FAscism for Mexico?" Ave Maria XLVII (New Series) (June 18, 1938), 769-72.

Goode saw the struggle as being these two against the "primacy of the human person." He noted similarities in Communism and Fascism, such as the State being synonymous with the party, the totalitarian nature of rule under one man, and the suppression of liberty. Communism, it was admitted, differed in its approach to religion, for it was materialistic *in toto*, while Fascism was materialistic in practice, though some nod was given to religion by the state. Goode felt, however, that this was not authentic, and suggested that those who wished to see the Fascist attitude toward Catholicism should go to Germany where Catholics were in a minority.[87]

The *Catholic Worker*, meanwhile, maintained opposition not only to Italian Fascism, but to any indication of Fascist-type incursions on the scene of American government: "Beware of all state regulation because it leads to Fascism." This newspaper felt that the best solution to labor problems was the organization of Catholic workmen, especially since the editors felt that labor unions as they presently existed were insufficient. The State, meanwhile was to step in only when the evils of society could be met by no other means, and therefore, the paper was strongly fearful of such government programs as the N.R.A.[88] The same publication quoted an address by the Reverend Edmund Walsh, S.J., vice-president of Georgetown University, given at American University in Washington in 1934. He felt that if the wealthy minority in the United States continued to avoid its social responsibilities to the poor, either the government or mobs would step in and take their wealth away from them.[89]

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[87] Bernard Goode, "Fascism and Communism," *Catholic Mind*, XXXVI (May 22, 1939), 686-88.

[88] "Days with an End," *Catholic Worker* I (April, 1934), 3.

Peter Maurin, in February, 1935, contrasted the Fascist doctrine to that of the Catholic Worker. Fascists were described as believing in national economy for national and private interest, the regulation of industry by the State to assure wages, class collaboration under State supervision, and cooperation of employers' unions with workers' unions. The CAtholic Worker, however, was described as opting for gentle personalism and traditional Catholicism, personal responsibility towards the needs of one's brother, daily practice of the works of mercy, Houses of Hospitality, Farming communes, a new society within the shell of the old.[90] Therefore, it was clear that the Worker was opposed to capitalism, a feeling that was evident, for example, in an article by Donald Powell in May, 1935. Fascism was seen as making man an insect, while capitalism made him an animal. The aims of Fascism and Communism, for that matter, were described as more clearly sound socially than those of capitalism.[91] Again in December, 1935, the FAscist doctrine was opposed in the Catholic Worker, which saw especially harmful the suppression of interference with party ideas and the complete control of every facet of life by the party. Also, Fascism depended so heavily upon a strong police force, material progress, "the sop to the proletariat," and a "goat" Marxism.[92]

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[89] "Fascism or Communism Nearer Than in 1933," Catholic Worker II (November, 1934), 3.

[90] Peter Maurin, "What Fascists Say They Believe," Catholic Worker, II (February, 1935), 1-2.

An editorial in Sign magazine in May, 1937, referred to the suppression of a movement among youths in Belgium by Cardinal Josef Ernest Van Roey, Archbishop of Malines and Primate of Belgium. This action was applauded, because it seemed that the organization was pro-Fascist, and although the Church may have made agreement with Fascism in Italy, and worked along with it in some cases, this did not mean final approval, and the Church must necessarily and at all times insist upon her rights and be prepared to defend them.[93] Sign noted in the same issue that while the Pope had never condemned Fascism, and even seemed to praise it when speaking favorably of special syndical and corporative organizations, the social teachings of the Church do not agree with the totalitarian idea of the State. Still, there were admitted to be some good points to Fascist doctrine, primarily the opposition to false liberalism, the emphasis on the common good, and the organization of groups in industry and the professions.[94]

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[91] Donald Powell, "Capitalism, Fascism, and Communism," Catholic Worker, III (May, 1935), 3.

[92] "The Approach of Fascism," Catholic Worker, III (December, 1935), 3.

[93] "A Cardinal Spikes Pro-Fascist Movement," Sign XVI (May, 1937), 582.

In September, 1937, Sign protested the opinions of some that Fascism rather than Communism was the greatest menace of the world at the time. Actually, the editors felt that if there had been no Communism, there may be no Fascism. Fascism has its dangers, it is true, but it is not as worldwide in scope or danger as Communism. Further, the editors felt that mush of the anti-Fascism of the day was, in reality, anti-Catholicism.[95]

The Ecclesiastical Review published an article by Albert Bandini in April, 1939, which indicated that American Catholics were being accused of Fascism without cause. It was true that the Church in Italy seemed to get along well with the Fascist government, but the Church in America was opposed to Fascism in America. Certainly, no American would favor the totalitarianism, statolatry and sympathy strikes which the Fascists professed. However, some facets of the

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[94] "Church Opposed to Excesses of Fascism," Sign, XVI (May, 1937), 621-22.

[95] "The Anti-Fascist Front," Sign, XVII (September, 1937), 67.

Fascist political thought might well be put into practice in America. For example, Bandini felt that economic organization in the Italian sense, a guild-like structure for better cooperation between labor and management, would be good for American society.[96]

Stanley James wrote for the Catholic World in 1933, and noted the advantages of the Fascist regime in Italy, which he saw, however, could not be duplicated anywhere else. He felt that Fascism had aided Italy, not through tyranny, but through the infusion of a new spirit. Mussolini had recaptured the Soul of Italy, restoring it and sythesizing it into a dynamic person.[97] Still, the Catholic World was not adopting a pro-Fascist attitude, as we have seen before, and as was evident from an article in August, 1937, in which the author characterized the Fascist cause as materialistic, having no respect for the individual, deifying the State, and antireligious. It was felt that the only thing in such a system which would protect religion was the vacillating will of the dictator, certainly a tenuous situation. Hence, Fascism was similar to Communism in many ways, and therefore condemned by the Church.[98] In 1939, the editors of the Catholic World expressed their position--that while most Catholic publications in America had been anti-Communist to the point of almost ignoring Fascism their magazine strongly opposed Fascism from the very beginning, and continued in the opposition throughout. They noted that among Catholics, there had been some resentment to the strong stance against Fascism taken by the magazine. Catholics, they felt, had been fooled by the concessions made to the Church by Mussolini, to the point that they would even follow him and approve the Ethiopian war. The editors noted that they had heard from a worthy source that the extent to which the Fascisti wished to control the Church was seen in the interregnum between Pius XI and Pius XII, during which the Fascists tried to influence the Cardinals to ignore Pacelli and vote for either Cardinal Della Corta or Cardinal Massini, who were evidently more favorably inclined toward the Mussolini government.[99]

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[96] Albert R. BAndini, "Can There Be An 'American' Fascism?" The Ecclesiastical Review, C (April, 1939), 301-11.

[97] Stanley B. James, "Democracy in a New Age," Catholic World, CXXXVII (August, 1933), 513-18.

[98] Paul Kiniery, "Equals in Evil: Communism and Fascism," Catholic World, CXLV (August, 1937), 524-31.

During this period of the latter thirties, the diocesan press mirrored the spirit of the times and proved itself defensive to the charges and allegations made by those who wished to align Fascism and Catholicism. At the same time the question of Communism was raised by the Catholics, usually in line with the argument that anti-Communism did not necessarily mean pro-Fascism.

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[99] "Getting Wise to Fascism," Catholic World, CXLIX (April, 1939), 1-9.

During this period, the Brooklyn Tablet showed that it was strongly influenced by the Brooklyn Christian Front, the Reverend Edward Lodge Curran, and Patrick F. Scanlon, its editor, who was also very much interested in the Christian Front. For example, during this period, the full text of the previous Sunday's radio address by Father Coughlin was carried in each issue of the Tablet, along with a summary of the following week's topic. In 1936, an editorial was written on the subject of Fascism and Communism. It was noted by the editors that a new organization had been formed--the League against War and Fascism. The Tablet charged that, as a matter of fact, the Communist party was strongly in support of the League. Actually, it was felt that Communism was a factor in the rise of Fascism: "If the League Against War and Fascism were sincere, they would also be against Communism, not only because it represents the worst and bloodiest type of war, but because it breeds Fascism."[100]

In San Francisco, The Monitor, rather than seeing a cause-and-effect relationship between Communism and FAscism, saw them rather as "competitive evils." The editors stated that Fascism produced the same kind of totalitarian state as did Communism: the national will became the will of one particular group, the individual was unable to express what he thought, and propaganda ruled supreme. In Italy, the

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[100] "War and Fascism," The Tablet, (July 25, 1938).

Fascist state was totalitarian to the extent that the Catholic Church, an expression of the national tradition, was sought as a mere assistant to the State. The only solution to such a state of affairs was seen as coming from a return to the Christian moral foundation of individual rights, the recognition by the state that the individual has social rights and duties.[101]

The Baltimore Catholic Review in 1938 noted that many who accused Catholics of Fascism themselves supported the Leftist forces in the Spanish Civil War: We know of no men or women who prate more about Democracy as opposed to FAscism and Nazism than the men and women who are allied with various organizations in this country which are supporting the Leftist Government, the enemy of the Catholic Church in Spain. Some, it was admitted, had been duped, but many, while favoring the Communist forces, still accused the American Catholic Hierarchy of being traitors, but:

> There are no American citizens who have more patriotically, more eloquently, more logically, and more convincingly called upon the people of this country to stand by American ideals than the same members of our American hierarchy.[102]

At the end of the summer of that same year, The Catholic Review made even clearer and stronger its anti-Fascist position.

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[101] William Garlan, "Communism-Fascism are Competitive Evils," The Monitor, (February 12, 1938).

[102] "Pouter-Pigeon Patriots," The Catholic Review (June 24, 1938).

The editors spoke of Mussolini as a "Man of Hate," and noted that he had boasted of the wars in which Italy had been engaged, showing that he preferred war to peace. This aroused severe doubts as to his sanity: "Only a madman would boast about such things."[103]

The Boston Pilot remarked in 1938 that an investigation in Massachusetts uncovered no international Fascist activity in that state. It was suggested, therefore, that much of the anti-Catholic propaganda prevalent at the time was merely name-calling, and that the epithet "Fascist" was often used to cloud the issue by Communists who wished to cast the shadow of doubt upon anti-Communists. The claim was that: "Communists want to scream 'Fascist' at every exercise of legitimate or pre-empted authority." Fascism, said the Pilot, was never intended for export in the first place, and more than that, it is not so bad as its critics state, for while in theory Fascism allows of nothing outside the State, in practice, " . . . hard theory is tempered to a large degree in concessions to rights of man older than any state."[104] Three months later, the same editorial page was the vehicle by which the appellation "Fascist" was described for the readers as the "outstanding bogy of the country." The editors agreed that the type of Fascism known to the world was strictly a German and Italian phenomenon, and that was never intended to be exported. Therefore, the charges placed against any individuals in America, particularly Catholics, were entirely without foundation.[105] Again in October, 1938, The Pilot returned to its previous position, that Fascism in theory and in practice were two different realities:

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[103] "Mussolini," The Catholic Review, (September 30, 1938).

[104] "International Isms," The Pilot, (June 18, 1938).

> Fascist theory, as voiced by extremists, wavers perilously close to trespass on the Church's spiritual authority. The State is no man's supreme loyalty . . . practically, Church and State in Italy have achieved reasonable harmony . . . the practical fact is that, as the system is applied, the Church has found Fascism a reasonable will. Where disagreement has occurred, the trouble-maker is usually some zealous super-patriot who demands State idolatry instead of the sane loyalty due from citizens to their civil superiors.[106]

Finally, in the New World, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Chicago, in 1934, praise was offered for Mussolini because of his strong stand against birth control. This was a praise which often recurs throughout the literature at various points. The New World compared Mussolini's statements indicating that he felt that prosperity could not be built on death or the absense of births, while at the same time pledging himself to do everything in his power to make sure that all mouths in the country would be fed. The editors then refer this attitude to that in America, where

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[105] "Hidden Realities," The Pilot, (September 3, 1938).

[106] "No Real Antagonist," The Pilot, (October 8, 1938).

" . . . there are too many things to be consumed . . . " and yet " . . . some would have us reclaim prosperity by having less consumers."[107]

One final note might be added, now that we have seen the reaction of the Catholic press and individuals to the Fascists in Italy, for it seems almost symptomatic of the general attitude among Americans. Father Robert McNamara states that Americans in Rome, the students at the North American College, were little more than interested bystanders to the Fascist experience. However, in 1940, with the march of Germany into many European countries, and the approval of the action by the Fascists, United States Bishops began to withdraw their seminarians from Rome and bring them to seminaries in their homeland. On May 7, 1940, the rector of the College, Bishop Ralph L. Hayes, received word that all American citizens were advised to leave Italy, since Mussolini was about to enter the war. The College closed.[108] This would seem to typify American Catholic reaction. During the rise and early years of the Fascist, they could be bystanders, less than interested about much of what happened. However, like other Americans, Catholics noted that the Italian government was a thing which seemed permanent and would cause difficulty in international affairs. This happened at the same time that Catholics were being accused of complicity with the Italian government, and therefore we have seen on two fronts, opposition developed--defense of themselves against the charge of incipient Fascism, coupled with idealogical criticism of the Fascist political philosophy, Finally, when the die was cast, CAtholics joined all other Americans in supporting the allied efforts against the axis powers. They could no longer by bystanders when the future of the world was at stake.

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[107] "The Wrong Way," *The New World*, (February 2, 1934).

[108] Robert F. McNamara, *The American College in Rome: 1855-1955* (Rochester: Christopher Press, 1956), pp. 590-91.

To close this study, let us mention just one more event in which American Catholics were involved. On December 23, 1939, a Christmas letter was given by President Roosevelt to Pope Pius XII. It was accepted by Archbishop Ameleto Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, and ARchbishop Francis Spellman of New York. The letter contained a hope for peace and the observation that all world leaders must work together. Therefore, a personal representative of the President would be sent to Rome--Myron C. Taylor.[109] The world was on the verge of war. The forces of Fascism and Nazidm were about to make Europe a battlefield. All churches were needed to rally behind the cause of peace.

This period in the history of the Church in America marks a notable change in the feelings and activities of

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[109] U. S. Department of State, United States and Italy: 1936-1946 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1948), pp. 7-9.

American Catholics. The reaction to the criticism the Church took because of the Italo-Ethiopian war, as well as those reactions to the opposition caused because of the tendency of Fascism in general marks some definite lines of advance in Catholic thinking.

First of all, it is important to notice that Catholics during this period sought to make their feelings known as American citizens. A good number of the articles cited above were written with an eye to the general arguments proposed both for and against the Italian phenomenon. A number of notable articles were written with no other basis than the justice involved in the actions of the Mussolini government, the effects upon the African nations, and the general spirit tending toward war in the world.

It is, of course, a fact that some spoke merely as Catholics, nothing else. These were the writers, few in number, who defended the Italian activity on the grounds of advancement of the Church, coupled with the thought that the "barbarian" culture of the Ethiopian nation deserved incorporation into the Italian nation. Coupled with thi, there was a definite fear within a great deal of the Catholic press, echoing the feelings of a number of secular writers, that such a war of expansion would lead to grave consequences which could easily develop into a world conflagration.

It should also be noted, of course, that the Holy Father's name often came into the discussions. Attacks were made on many sides that Pius XI had remained silent at a time when his voice might well have prevented the action by the Italian armies. This was seen by some to be basically untrue--that the Pope had, as a matter of fact, spoken against war in general so close in time to the beginning of the Italo-Ethiopian war that there should have been no question in the minds of the Italian leaders that he was definitely in opposition to their proposed invasion of the Africa continent. However, at the same time, there were Catholics who felt that the Pope had not spoken, and defended him for his silence. To them, the Holy Father was acting wisely in refusing to be drawn into the conflict, because either he would not be listened to, and/or his forthright views on the subject might well cause the government to impose restrictions on the Church in general and the Pope in particular.

But the Italo-Ethiopian war was not the only area in which Catholic writers chose to break with their rather general former habit of merely chronicling the events in Italy, or commenting almost exclusively on the events which affected the Church, as for example the Lateran Treaties and the Catholic Action controversy. Catholic writers in this period of the later thirties were willing to examine the case of the Fascist phenomenon on the grounds of political philosophy, and consequences to the safety and well-being of the world at large. Therefore, they were more willing to examine the acts of the Italian government in terms of their consequences. They were equally willing to fault the general political theory of the Corporate State, coupled with the specific actions by which this came to power and remained there. Some, of course, wanted to make their judgment purely in the light of American political thought, demanding almost a complete democracy for the Italians, but most were content merely to defend the general rights of human beings judging the Fascists in the light of human rights.

This is not to say, however, that Catholic writers ignored the question of purely Catholic matters. When they were attacked, as Catholics, or when the Church or distinguished members of the Church were criticized for a seeming connection with Fascism, the writers were quick to reply. The general feeling in the United States by this time was unfavorable to Fascism. Therefore, if it were alleged that Catholics in America were not only interested in but connected with the world-wide Fascist movement, Catholic writers were more than likely to reply strongly.

In summation, it seems safe to say that from this point,possibly in reaction to the tendency of diverse political opinion among Catholics in America, which was beginning to become more pronounced and was best exemplified by the Coughlin-Ryan schools, Catholics would react, not only to Fascism, but to other political phenomena and events of world-wide significance, not only with a background of

Catholic moral and social principles, and not only with a purely American outlook on things. Rather, divergence can be noted and the strong tendency to examine the facts in the case in a more open, more universal, world-view.

CHAPTER VI

PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSES AND CONCLUSION

Thus far, the treatment of the American Catholic reaction to Italian Fascism has been primarily that of a study of specific reaction to particular phenomena: the rise and early years of Fascism, the Lateran Treaty, the Catholic Action controversy, the Italo-Ethiopian war, the attacks made upon Catholics as a result of Italian political and military activity in the late 1930's. In every case, Catholic reaction was directed at the particular event, with few references to the total picture of Fascism. For this reason, Catholics tended in many cases to judge the Fascist experiment in terms of a precise activity of the government, and usually refer this to the total picture of good or bad coming to the Church, most specifically in Italy, but in the rest of the world as well. Therefore, in many cases there was no general view of Fascism, either approving or disapproving, on the part of Catholic writers in America. The American Catholic press, then, was mixed in its reaction to the rise and early years of power of the Fascists, although generally it was favorable. The Mussolini government received praise from most Catholic quarters with the signing of the Lateran Treaties. The Catholic Action controversy brought some to a feeling of dissatisfaction with the Fascists, although still the Catholics as a whole were not willing to oppose the government completely, but sought rather to achieve a balance, faulting the actions of repression, but still holding out hope for a successful Church-State arrangement in Italy. As the Fascists became more militant, especially in regard to the Ethiopian question, more and more Catholics began to turn against them. In the late 1930's influenced by a negative attitude of militarism and suppression of freedom in Italy, coupled with adverse public reaction to the Fascist cause in the United States, American Catholics began to swing in great numbers to a position of anti-Fascism.

There were some authors, however, who examined Italian Fascism not merely in the light of specific events, but in a more general, philosophical framework. This took into account political philosophy most especially, but was also interested in making a decision in the light of religious principles as well.

Wilfrid Parsons, S. J., a political analyst whose credentials included the editorship of America magazine for some time, examined the Italian Fascists and their rise to power in terms of the political conditions in Italy in the early 1920's. Parsons felt that the second decade of the twentieth century was particularly troublesome for the Italian nation because of the influence of the Freemasons. Their political philosophy had been able to infiltrate the highest positions in government, so much so that he claimed that the entire political order was "...riddled with Freemasonry."[1] For this reason, in the light of the fact that the Freemasons were in the political sphere and permeating it with their false principles of religion and power, the governments previous to Mussolini, especially the Nitti government, were ineffective. Parsons notes as well that the climax of the Fascist struggle for control, the March on Rome, was foreordained because of the mediocrity of previous parliamentary rulers, and the inefficiency and governmental corruption that went hand in hand with such a state of affairs. He felt, then, that something was bound to happen in Italy, that "The revolution would have happened even had there been no Mussolini. It might have been a Bolshevist revolution."[2] This seems to be a common theme among writers--that Freemasonry, with its liberal influences, was making it possible in Italy for the eventual takeover of the government by Communist forces. Luigi Villari, for example, agrees fully with this contention of Parsons, for he has written that the incapacity to act of the Nitti government, hampered as it was by the strength of the Freemasons, was responsible for the unrest which brought about the Fascist revolution. Nitti, said Villari, failed to handle well the growing domination of Communists in various parts of the country. However, Villari does not agree with Parsons that a revolution of the Fascist kind was either necessary or inevitable. He felt rather that the sole blame should be put at the feet of the Nitti government, and especially the ineffectual leadership of the cabinet, which could not meet the challenge resolutely:

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[1] Wilfrid Parsons, The Pope and Italy (New York: The American Press, 1929), pp. 39-40.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

> Had it acted as a Government should have done and undertaken the restoration of order itself, there would never have been a Fascist government in Rome.[3]

Villari recognized many reasons for the success of the Fascists in Italy, but he ascribed primary importance to the fact that the Fascist government had built a strong foundation of nationalism--a spirit of pride in country and a feeling that all people, all activities in Italy must be done for the good of the country as a whole. This was particularly, and one might say symptomatically evident in the attitude of the Fascists toward religion. The Mussolini forces in general recognized religion especially for the good it might contribute to the government. Therefore, in a special way, Catholicism was favored, because the Italian people were Catholics. The Fascist leaders saw and capitalized upon the Catholic propensity of the citizens, seeing in it a further opportunity to create a bond of deeper national unity, which they could easily strengthen by concessions in law to the religion of the majority. Conversely, Judaism, and Protestantism, because of their minority status, were considered "foreign to the Italian spirit."[4] Parsons, therefore, treated Fascism as a response and reaction to the Freemasonry which bred lawlessness and Communism. Villari agreed except that he felt Fascism was not the only possible answer. He preferred to explain Fascist success in terms of the appeal to nationalism which the Fascists initiated, which extended even to the religious sphere.

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[3] Luigi Villari, The Fascist Experiment (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1926), p. 41.

While such authors as Parsons and Villari saw Fascist growth and success more in terms of the immediate causes which brought them about and their reaction to a concrete situation, other Catholic authors looked to the origins of

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[4] _Ibid_., p. 201.

Fascism more from a viewpoint of the history of political thought. For these men, one could only understand the Fascist experience if one were to understand the political philosophies and structures which preceded Fascism and which in some way or other tended to influence the growth of Fascism, or even to aid in making it a reality.

For many, the appearance of Fascism was primarily the end result of the nineteenth-century growth of liberalism. Ross Hoffman, for example, indicates that the liberal society was so obsessed with the concept of individual freedom, that the general welfare was, to a great extent, overlooked. Therefore, the concept of "community" which had perdured from the early Christian tradition, had been destroyed.[5] Hoffman felt as well that the reaction to liberalism brought about the state of affairs which was present between the world wars, a danger whose primary symptom seemed to be the over-activity of the state in human affairs. Hoffman seemed to think that human freedom, as stressed by the liberal society, became so out of control that society itself was clamoring for order, and that the state came to exercise its influence and breach the gap. But Hoffman also felt that the activity of the state was such that even the amount of its present involvement was not the last stage, but rather that it would continue to exercise more and more control in the future.[6] Hoffman saw in this over-activity of the state the possibility of over-reaction on the part of the Christian. In this same work, Hoffman warned that because of the feeling that the state was overly involved, some Christians might well feel that the most obvious thing for them to do was to turn away completely from the state, almost as if it were an unreal situation. This would be tragic to Hoffman, because of the fact that the Church has always been able to temper the state and exercise a sobering influence upon it, and especially as the state grew more and more powerful, the influence of the Church was more needed.[7]

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[5] Ross J. S. Hoffman, The Will to Freedom (London: Sheed and Ward, 1935), pp. 34-35.

Hoffman, in the same books, examines the label "totalitarian state" and seeks to apply it to the Fascist and Communist society. For him, the concept of totalitarianism is based on the premise that the state must control every sphere of human activity. Therefore, no rights of men are recognized as beyond its scope, even such rights as those deriving from God or from nature. If this be the definition, Hoffman feels that Communism and Fascism cannot be described as totalitarian, because Fascists recognize such spiritual realities as God and nation, while the Communists deify matter.[8] Hoffman goes further in an explanation of this contention, while admitting that the solution seems to be a change in the definition of totalitarianism. He says that Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy are not totalitarian as well because "each has made a concordat with the Papacy, and by so doing has recognized in its law a limit upon the reach of its authority."[9]

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[6] Ross J. S. Hoffman, Tradition and Progress (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1938), p. 132.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

However, Fascism, despite its concordat, is contrary to the teachings of the Church. This is primarily true because of the false attitude the Fascists have toward the Church, considering it to be only an abstract and spiritual reality, but in no way concrete, visible and material.[10] To Hoffman, then, the solution would be found in what he considers the basis for the rise of over-involvement by the state, namely a return to pre-liberal stress upon the community. Hoffman sees in the republican form of government a return to the idea that government belongs to the community and not the community to the government.[11]

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[8] *Ibid*., pp. 118-123.

[9] *Ibid*., p. 120.

[10] *Ibid*., p. 127.

[11] *Ibid*., p. 128.

The fact that Hoffman felt that Fascism did not measure up to the traditional definition of the totalitarian state should not indicate a sympathy on his part for the Fascist cause, but merely a study on his part of an existing phenomenon. Therefore, in 1935, he mentioned that as such, Fascism was little more than "a compound of varied and even discordant elements," elements which really were not conjoined effectively until the March on Rome.[12] He felt that the only Fascist philosophy was pragmatism, its only program expediency. This he explained again in historical terms which went back much farther than post-war Europe or Italy. He saw the post-liberal mode of life as the primary factor against which human nature was reacting.[13] He further described this mode of life as a "Platonist reaction against all that nominalist stream of thought which culminated in Marxist materialism, and it makes, therefore, a very radical attack on the modern political and social order."[14] While opposed to the Fascist experience, Hoffman sees it as a natural consequence upon modern man viewing the disintegration of society. More specifically, materialistic Communism is described by Hoffman as possessing a systematized body of doctrines, at war with religion, breaking with the traditional forms, and cosmopolitan, while Fascism is pragmatic rather than systematized, favorable toward some religious institutions, leaning upon the past, and extremely nationalistic.[15] Here, the author seems to come closest to agreeing with such authors as Parsons and Villari, in that he sees Communism as the opponent of Fascism. For Hoffman, however, Communism is not so much typified by the immediate actions of some groups, as by a political system which grew from abuses in society.

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[12] The Will to Freedom, p. 31

[13] Ibid., p. 33.

[14] Ibid., p. 36.

Fascism, according to Hoffman, then, is a reaction against something that has developed over many decades, since the rise of liberalism. In practice, Fascism manifests itself in a reawakening of the traditional human impulse toward social corporatism. Likewise, it can be seen as the re-establishment and return to traditional moral and spiritual values of human nature. Further, it exploits the reaction to present societal conditions in terms of stress upon private property. Hoffman, however, admits that failings of Fascism in that in practice it perverts what it defends--the questionable tactics recorded in Italy such as confiscation of private property, and the doctrine of state supremacy--seem to indicate much of the same problems against which the Fascists were supposedly warning.[16] Fascism has returned, to a certain extent, to the ancient theory of "Divine Right," but its variations are such that while it leads away from the Marxist perversion of materialism, it establishes a worse perversion in the Hegelian negation of republican monarchy, sanctioned and based in the theories of popular sovereignty and the social contract.[17] Such a reaction to Marxist thought means that in no Western nation have the Communists a chance to win. However, Fascism still has too many dangers in capitalizing upon this reaction. The romanticist spirit which it enkindles gives birth to a wild spirit which, "lacking control . . . can turn civilized order upside down." This is especially seen in the exaggerated nationalism of the Fascists, whereby the state becomes a super-being, or even worse, a "half-divine thing," possessed of a soul.[18]

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[15] _Ibid._, pp. 24-25.

[16] _Ibid._, p. 59.

In July, 1934, Sign magazine had its first real attempt to examine the phenomenon of Fascism by printing an article by the same Ross Hoffman, who once more sought to examine the political and philosophical principles of Fascist doctrine. The article was somewhat favorable to the Fascists, for it noted that they held a doctrine which directly opposed the liberalistic concept of exaltation of the individual. It therefore was considered to be much better than Socialism, which was materialistic, thriving on class consciousness. Through Fascism, the state was finally able to govern the rich as well as the poor, and spiritual values were stressed, revived, and preserved. There was, however, a danger in this development. Hoffman compared Fascism to the earlier period in history when local princes emerged to stress nationality and state authority. Their actions led to war, and this was a danger which Fascism must soon recognize--that it could not be a local cure for world disorder unless it remembered the common bond of civilization.[19] While certainly Hoffman was not strongly pro-Fascist, his political philosophy was such that he could at least be in sympathy with some parts of the government, particularly where it concerned itself with overthrowing the liberalism of the past, which he felt was so harmful.

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[17] Ibid., p. 65.

[18] Ibid., p. 43.

In 1933, another philosophical approach was used to study the question of Fascism. At this time, the American Catholic Philosophical Association, at its annual convention, heard a paper by Edward F. Murphy, which the Fascist experience was examined in the light of traditional Catholic, Thomist terms. He analyzed Fascism as a movement concerned more with action than philosophy, and mainly a reaction to democracy and unbridled capitalism. Positively, it seemed to be very idealistic, in what philosophical tenets Fascism espoused, favoring religion, law, and order. This was also aimed at action in the sense that the state would marshall all its powers and pit them against its enemies, primarily those which led to economic anarchy and political insolvency. It was truly syndicalist, dictatorial, and it favored a plenitude of power for the government. Murphy then compared the Fascist concept of government with that of St. Thomas Aquinas. For Thomas, there were drawbacks and virtues to democracy. The state must be a dynamic thing, securing a fuller and finer life for its members, but it was not to devour everything. The sovereignty of the state resides in the nation as a whole, and this is tempered by popular representation. Along with this, therefore, nationalism is considered a good as long as justice prevails and it is based on the common good, not merely the dreams of empire. The syndicalist concept of Fascism was seen by Murphy to be comparable to the medieval guilds at the time of St. Thomas, and therefore, in theory it was good. The conclusion drawn by the paper was that Fascism, in many ways, agreed with the Thomistic idea of the State, but that Fascism, in order to be truly successful, must learn to follow Thomas more closely, thereby ridding itself of imperfections.[20]

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[19] Ross J. S. Hoffman, "What is Fascism?" Sign XIII (July, 1934), 749-52.

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[20] Edward F. Murphy, "The Fascist State," Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association (1933), pp. 63-80.

F. Stuart Campbell, a Catholic, in reflecting upon Fascism, tended to agree with the conclusions of Hoffman, that liberalism in Europe, particularly in the nineteenth century, produced the reaction that brought about Fascist thought. This liberalism, he said, fought against the great heritage of medieval times, and as a matter of fact, destroyed it. Once this heritage had been overcome, its good points, particularly the Christian traditions, were lost and the vacuum was filled by the notions of state and nationalism found in the Fascist and National Socialist philosophies.[21] Campbell goes one step further in examining the Fascist phenomenon, and speculates what would happen should it come to the United States. He felt that it would be more brutal, more anti-cultural, and more devastating than in Europe. Such an event could occur unless something in the American society were done for the young, for then the "best" elements of the society would be attracted to the Fascist cause. With such a state of affairs, Christianity and its traditional values and teachings would seem to be only tolerated and might even be forced to return to the catacombs.[22]

Another Catholic examination of the philosophical principles underlying Fascism appeared in 1937--a pamphlet printed by the Paulist Press, and written by Raymond T. Feely.

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[21] Francis Stuart Campbell, _The Menace of the Herd_ (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1943), pp. 213-14.

[22] _Ibid_., pp. 271-73.

Feely analyzed the end result of Fascist intellectual development, refering to the outstanding characteristics of Fascism under three headings--the political structure, the economic structure, and the philosophical basis. In the political order, Fascism was considered totalitarian and a dictatorship. The exaltation of the state was such that it became the supreme end for all to uphold, and toward this end, any and all means might be justifiably used. The state thereby became a "mystical entity," whose political structure must be modified, in an essentially undemocratic although peaceful manner. This broad basis of state supremacy is, of course, nationalistic, and based on the stress of the finest points of nationalistic tradition. Also, while revolution within the social order of the country itself was to be accomplished in a peaceful manner, the resultant nationalism will develop a definite pro-war attitude in the realm of foreign policy.

In the sphere of economics, the corporate state retains the concept of private property, under the direction, of course, of the government. In this case, the government serves the added function of exacting of capital its vital social obligations toward the end of the general welfare. The retention of the concept of private property distinguishes Fascism from Communism, especially in the economic order, and added to this distinction is the Fascist program which retains the social stratification of economic class, but without the element of class struggle. Feely refers to the result of Fascist economic theory as "economic dictatorship," planned economy.

The philosophy underlying all of Fascist doctrine, according to Feely, finds its basis in a predilection for the spiritual aspects of life. These are stressed to the utmost by Fascist leaders as being most important for the betterment of the state. Therefore, religion is encouraged, but strictly out of motives of expediency. The same is true for family life, which is seen as necessary, but for the end of the welfare of the state.[23] Feely, then, was basically opposed to Fascism, but he did admit there was much good that could be said about it. Like many other authors, he gave the impression that if he had the choice to make, he would choose Fascism over Communism. Again, this was a case of seeing only this duality of choice possible for man in certain circumstances.

Two authors who particularly keyed on the religious problem as indicative of the philosophical basis of the Fascist movement are George Catlin and Nicholas Timascheff, both

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[23] Raymond T. Feely, Fascism, Communism, U. S. A. (New York: Paulist Press, 1937), pp. 4-6.

Catholics. Catlin examined the Corporate State and decided that what actually was taking place in Italy was the deification of the State. He said that FAscism itself was a religion, and that it had set up its dictator as a demigod.[24] Timascheff, on the other hand, sees religion as merely a part of the whole picture of ways in which control could be exerted:

> The tendency of the Fascist state to interfere with every aspect of cultural life is the very cause of permanent difficulties with religion which it acclaims so long as religion is subservient to the desires of the rulers, but attacks if it displays any kind of independence.[25]

He goes on to say that, like everything else, religion was considered by Fascism to be a tool of the Corporate State. With this as a goal, Fascists emphasized anti-Communism, respect for authority and hierarchy, and a deeply founded respect for family life, but with the end in mind of winning religion to their side as well as securing their own power.[26] These two examinations of the Corporate State are noteworthy because they betray the outlook which some Catholics had and they point out reasons they would use to approach this conclusion. Religion is primary in their minds, whether it be the treatment of religion by the government, or the attitude of the government which thinks of itself and its institutions as a religion unto itself.

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[24] George E. G. Catlin, Preface to Action (New York: MacMillan, 1934), pp. 257-58.

[25] Nicholas S. Timascheff, Three Worlds: Liberal, Communist and Fascist Society (Milwaukee; Bruce, 1946), p.54.

[26] Ibid., pp. 90-91.

However, Catholics were not limited to a purely religious orientation in their study of the philosophical basis of Fascism. In 1933, for example, America magazine published an editorial analyzing Fascism, and coming to the conclusion that it was based, in its projection of the Corporate State, on false philosophical principles:

> In reality, Fascism, reprobated by the radicals, is akin to the criminal syndicalism outlawed by many of our State laws and defended by all the radicals.[27]

Chiefly, the editors felt that Fascism was to be opposed on philosophical grounds because in its syndicalist approach to governmental interference, it stifled private initiative and tended to foster merely the aims of the political party. Here, the stress seems to be on the end result of the syndicalism which the Fascists proposed, not necessarily the general forms of syndicalism.

A year later, the same magazine carried an article by the Reverend John LaFarge, S.J., in which the causes of Fascism were once more analyzed. For LaFarge, Fascism was, as well as other radical programs of social reconstruction, caused by social pessimism, the feeling that a sick society had to be cured by the most radical means, no matter what their content. LaFarge called upon Catholics to fight such pessimism, as it might appear even in America, by the principles which were theirs--a hope in the quality of human nature conjoined to a recognition of the power of God to overcome the feeling that "mechanical solutions are the only answer to moral problems."[28] Certainly we can see the influence of Catholic principles in the outlook and judgments of these articles, but there is yet the break from the treatment of Fascism merely on the plane of Catholic activity.

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[27] "What is Fascism?" America, XLIX (May 13, 1933), 124.

In 1935, Commonweal, however, returned to the policy of judging the Fascists on Catholic grounds and not pure human principles:

> Fascism is more squarely opposed to Catholicism precisely because it is not concerned with material welfare, but with a vicious pseudo-spirituality.[29]

This pseudo-spirituality is noted--the "reification of society" and it is compared to the Christian dialectic of freedom, which is more consistent with the dignity of man, and therefore more acceptable than either Fascism or Communism. Again, the emphasis on Christian (for which we can easily substitute "Catholic" without doing violence to the mind of the author) principles would almost seem to indicate a view that such values as freedom are the sole property of the Christian-Catholic tradition.

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[28] John LaFarge, "Is There Danger of Fascism?" America LI (July 21, 1934), 345-46.

[29] Charles N. R. McCoy, "Dialectics of Freedom," Commonweal, XXII (October 25, 1935), 626-27.

The Catholic Mind, as has been noted throughout this paper, continued a strong anti-Fascist editorial policy from almost the very inception of the Fascist movement. There is, however, one significant exception if it can be called that. In March, 1934, the Catholic Mind reprinted an article from the English journal Blackfriars. The author, Herbert Shove, sought to show how Fascism and CAtholicism are based on similar principles, and therefore compatible. The magazine published the article without consent. Certainly, it was known that the general policy had been that the magazine was anti-Fascist, and therefore the question must be asked whether this be a regression, a negation, or merely a case of "showing the other side." Shove, in the article, noted that Catholicism and Fascism share the importance placed on spiritual values. He then goes on to mention a proposed sterilization law which because of its nature, would be opposed by Catholic and Fascist alike. He continues by defending the Fascist suppression of opposing political parties and religious bodies other than Catholic. In both cases, even in the instance of the

Popular Party, religion is used as a cloak for sectional dominance and practices subversive to the public good. Both Fascism and the Catholic Church would agree that such parties are bad for this reason. Further, the Church should continue to have support from the government because it is national and anti-sectional by its very name. However, unauthorized Catholic organizations should rightly be suppressed, again because of their divisive nature.

The conclusion of the article is that the Church is basically Fascist, and that Catholicism and Fascism should not conflict unless the Church be false to Fascism. The interests of the State, on the other hand, cannot conflict with the moral law. Fascism is seen as primarily a Christian philosophy, negating the rampant pagan selfishness so evident in the world.[30] Certainly this is a surprising article to find in the Catholic Mind, especially because it so obviously identifies the two forces and seems to approve not only of cooperation, but also of conjunction.

Christopher Dawson, the English writer, had a great effect on the thought of American Catholics as well as those of his native land. It is interesting to see in his book the approach that he takes in studying the development of political philosophy which spawned the Fascist movement. Dawson agrees with Ross Hoffman that the concept of community is basic to the Christian tradition from the very beginning. However, Dawson rather feels that this concept has not really been lost, but merely that the Christian context in which it emerged has been left behind by political philosophers of whatever persuasion. Dawson feels that the nineteenth century state stressed community, but purely in the context of nationalism rather than in Christian terms. Through such an arrangement, they sought to rebuild the social order.[31] Dawson's conclusions, however, are much the same as those of Hoffman. He feels that since 1917, the major political movements in Europe tended to merge the State in the community, thereby asserting the common will over every legal and constitutional limitation. However, he does not hold that all movements share this to the same degree:

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[30] Herbert Shove, "Fascism and Religion," Blackfriars, XV (January, 1934), 49-52. (cf., Catholic Mind, XXII, March 22, 1934, 117-20.)

> In Italian Fascism, this tendency is somewhat less developed, owing to the fact that the juridical conception of the State is too deeply rooted in the culture and traditions of the Latin world to be easily uprooted.[32]

His conclusion is that the result of such an activity is the emergence of the totalitarian state rather than the totalitarian community. Examining further the historical causes of the emergence of modern political movements, Dawson agrees that the liberal society of the nineteenth century was marked primarily by an alienation from the Christian values which were present in medieval times. He notes especially that the

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[31] Christopher Dawson, Beyond Politics (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1939), pp. 64-67.

[32] Ibid., pp. 67-68.

> . . . denial of Brotherhood of Man and the assertion of the omnipotence and absolutism of the State have their origin in the denial of the Natural Law which, as Leo XIII teaches, is the source and standard alike of human laws and human liberty.[33]

Dawson recognized the disunity that was so rampant in the world of his day, and besides the blame which he laid at the feet of the nineteenth-century liberal society, the English author felt that the roots of the problem were even deeper. Dawson claimed that one source of disunity had to be admitted to be the theological issues which had divided the world into Catholics and Protestants since the time of the Reformation. Further, he felt strongly that there were cultural issues of disagreement between Northern and Southern Europeans which had developed into more than a passing friction between descendants of the two cultures. Therefore, in religion and culture, there were divisions which had been present for a number of years and which had truly been allowed to grow to the point where they could be said to influence to a great degree twentieth-century world situations.[34] Therefore, Dawson seems to have approached the problem with more depth, and with a deeper historical background than that used by American analysts.

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[33] Christopher Dawson, The Judgment of Nations (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1942), pp. 145-46.

In 1939, Dawson stated the problem facing the world very tersely: "How an already mechanized society is to be physically revitalized and morally reinvigorated." Given the background of the sources of disunity and the reaction regarding previous liberal governments, Dawson saw the Fascist answer to the problem as directed towards forcible measures of social discipline, by which a mob could be turned into an army.[35] Actually, Dawson wrote later that this problem was faced by both Communistic and Fascistic ideologies with the elements of social organization which, in themselves, were good: the Communists chose comradship and association, the Fascists--leadership and vocation. But, the author notes, both deny individual and collective freedom, to the point where leadership for the Fascist becomes "demonaic worship of power," and the Communist "cult of comradship becomes an excuse for the subjection of the individual to the ruthless dictatorship of a party.[36]

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[34] _Ibid_., p. 175.

[35] _Beyond Politics_, pp. 80-81

Dawson saw the only hope of the world as resting in the possibility that nations would achieve a spiritual vision, that is Faith, and a spiritual will, that is charity. He thought that

> . . . the hope of the world rests in the last resort in the existence of a spiritual nucleus of believers who are the bearers of the seed of unity.[37]

As said above, Dawson reflects an English attitude toward history in examining this, as other, problems. Whereas the American Catholic has tended to examine Fascism in terms of democracy and Catholicism, Dawson is seen to have tempered both, and has sought to understand this phenomenon in terms of such values as human freedom, natural law, and European history.

While mentioning Dawson, it is well to mention another English view, that of Month magazine. This magazine found its way into many American Catholic rectories, schools, and homes, and is therefore noteworthy for that reason alone. However, it also indicates the ambivalence which existed in England just as it did in America toward the Fascist government in Italy. In March of 1933, an article was printed in the Month claiming that Fascism was a practical application of the principles of "Quadragesimo Anno," the social encyclical of Pope Pius XI. This was not necessarily planned by Mussolini, but was rather the result of the background in Catholic social teaching of those whom Il Duce was leading. The author disputes the suggestion that the state was appropriating too much power to itself, saying that it still allowed private ownership, and delegated its authority well through the various corporations. The conclusion of the article was followed by an editorial comment to the effect that Fascism is not that positive in its programs. The editors noted that it had intruded into the ecclesiastical domain, and that it must recall often the rights of God's Church as a perfect society.[38]

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[36] The Judgment of Nations, p. 194.

[37] Ibid., p. 221.

This same publication, in an editorial written for the issue of May, 1937, takes issue with the basic principles of Fascism. It was exceptionally strong in opposition to the state-imposed, state-regulated political and economic system in Italy, and noted that St. Thomas taught that the state should rather be a combination of individuals for their own and the general well-being. Unfortunately, Fascism had not followed this closely enough, for it annihilated the individual and the group, in favor of the larger entity, the state.[39]

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[38] Stanley B. James, "Fascism and Christian Economics," MOnth, CLXI (March, 1933), 218-24.

[39] Editorial, Month, CLXIX (May, 1937), 391-92

Conclusion

Throughout this study, an effort has been made to present as fairly as possible an accurate description of the thoughts, statements and activities of American Catholics in regard to Italian Fascism. It seems obvious throughout that there is indication of varied reaction for varied reasons. There is common hesitancy to condemn the government of Fascist Italy outright, coupled with an attitude at times distinctly Catholic--the fact that so many approached the problem with an eye to what would be the effects in Italy and throughout the world. This is conjoined, on occasion, with a judgment based largely on what might be termed strictly Catholic principles. It seems that almost exclusively, Catholic writers considered themselves to be addressing solely a Catholic audience. This may be the key to the whole understanding of the currents of political thought running through this period in the Catholic segment of America. This phrase itself says much, for the concept of "Catholic America" indicates that in the 1920's and 1930's there was still present among Catholics a mentality which led them to be separatist and defensive to too great an extent. Mussolini was too often praised and defended because he had restored the crucifix to the classroom. Fascism was too often accepted because its actual policies had a strange resemblance to the hierarchical pronouncements of Rome. A few writers brought this out clearly--there were many similarities in theory and practice between Fascism and Catholicism.

Still, one dare not over-react to such an occurrance. As a matter of fact, people both in Italy and in the United States supported Fascists, and this not merely for reasons of religion. An Italian writer, Angelo Rossi, has noted that the climate of the country of Italy immediately subsequent to the First World War was of such a nature that it was possible for the Mussolini regime not only to take over, but as well to gain acceptance from the people:

> The mass of the people was estranged and hostile and parliamentary crises followed one after the other continuously and without any signs of a solution appearing. Confusion, lassitude, and disquiet skillfully enhanced by controversy and a kind of "planned defeatism" prepared public opinion for the justification of dictatorship.[40]

This might explain the initial, in fact the continued success of the Fascist program in Italy, but it also indicates reasons for acceptance of the part of many outside Italy, who would see in the Mussolini government a stabilizing effect which was so badly needed in the Italian peninsula. As

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[40] Angelo Rossi (Angelo Tasca), The Rise of Italian Fascism, 1918-1922. (New York: Howard Fertig, 1966), 333.

Rossi states:

> Amongst the general conditions of fascism that should be mentioned is the existence of a kind of "climate," a special atmosphere of excitement and frenzy; this is so indispensable, both before and after victory, that the party leaders have to strain every nerve to keep it up.[41]

"Keep it up" they did, and as a result, although we should not predicate acceptance of the Fascist cause to the total population of Italy, there certainly was sufficient continued support that the government did not fall. There may have been some ambivalence on the part of the Italian people, and there certainly was confusion about the true nature and end result of Fascism, but disaffection was forestalled for many years by the party, and particularly by the actions of its leader. The person of Mussolini is important to consider, for his talent was such that he ably achieved the kind of support needed not only to stay in power, but to pass needed legislation. Still, he existed by no means without fear of opposition. The forces which brought him to power were certainly extrinsic, at least initially, to the political principles of Fascism. As Dante Germino remarks, the people may have supported Mussolini, but they did not support the idea of a totalitarian regime, and this because the Italians, by nature, were not constituted for totalitarianism.[42] It seems fair to summarize, therefore, in saying that the political condition of Italy after the war was of such a nature that the mood of the people made it possible to accept an anti-Communist, anti-Socialist form of government which would bring some order to the chaos apparently reigning supreme. Still, although the form of such a government happened to be Fascism, this should not lead us to believe that it was the deepest desire in the hearts of all Italians that this be their government. However, it did provide an answer at a time most needed.

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[41] _Ibid._, p. 341.

The people in Italy, while generally led to support, at least outwardly, the principles of Mussolini, once faced with the projection of his government into the kind of totalitarianism which would completely stifle all freedom in the country, began to be disenchanted. Added to this was the evidence of the same corruption and bad government which they had experienced so many times before. As Denis Mack-Smith states:

> When the people began to turn against fascism, it was not so much for its tyranny and bellicosity as for the sort of contemptible bad taste which permeated the whole of public life.[43]

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[42] Dante L. Germino, The Italian Fascist Party in Power (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959), p. 143.

[43] Denis Mack-Smith, Italy: A Modern History (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1959), p. 399.

It seems therefore that in Italy there was never complete and wholehearted acceptance of the Fascist principles by all, and we might admit a similar situation throughout the world. Certainly there was a great deal of foreign approval of Mussolini, but as Mack-Smith indicates, it was not only similar to the mixed and confused acceptance of Il Duce in Italy, but also has to be considered as a view from afar, influenced greatly by controlled press releases emanating from Italy and the fact that visitors to Italy during the regime were rarely shown anything but the good side of Fascism, in terms of the advancements in Italian society. Further, there is a rather common acceptance of the philosophical inquiry: " . . . whether foreign interference in domestic affairs does not usually have the reverse effect of strengthening a regime as indeed happened later over sanctions."[44]

Therefore, when compared to other attitudes, American Catholic reactions to Italian Fascism have a similarity to worldwide opinion, if not always in theory, at least in practice. It should be noted here that present-day historians are examining even more carefully the main thrust of Fascist doctrine, and are coming to the conclusion that the political philosophy of the party may not necessarily have been as developed or influential as one might want to read into the movement. In a real sense, Fascism was a movement which was more concerned with action, and while there existed certain political principles, there is no question but that Mussolini was a man of activity. The words of Fascism may not, in the long run, be as important as the deeds.

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[44] Ibid.

We might, in framing our conclusions, indicate a distinct similarity between American Catholic reaction to Fascism and to the National Socialist principles of Hitler. As F. K. Wentz remarks, "Particular current events often brought a shift in reactions . . ." These he lists, in speaking of American Catholics' reaction to the Hitler regime as: the uncertainty and speculation over the fate of the Center party in Germany, the confidence elicited by the concordat of 1933 with the Holy See, the occasional attacks and final persecution of the Church in Germany and the German anti-Communist stance.[45] It seems quite evident that there is a similarity of reaction to the Italian popular party, the Lateran Treaties and Concordat of 1929, the occasional attacks upon the Church, as for example the Catholic Action controversy, and the anti-Communist principles of the Fascists. A current seems to be able to be traced in Catholic thought, and there seems to be little doubt that American Catholics were acting in similar fashion for the same reasons. In general, it can be said that a favorable reaction came from Catholics in America when a foreign country, even if it be Fascist or Nazi, passed a law or performed an action favorable to the Church. On the other hand, when particular actions would cause the Church to suffer, there was widespread opposition on the part of Catholics. As a matter of fact, in the period towards the close of the 1930's, and especially as the war broke out, American Catholics would begin to put all of the 'isms' together, and seemingly forgetting the ideological differences, many of their leaderswould simply issue a blanket condemnation of Fascism, Communism, and Nazism. This seems to have taken place because of the similar threat to Catholic principles which these ideologies presented, but there can be no doubt that such an attitude was more concerned with the pragmatic danger involved than with the bases, and at times the actual carrying out of the intentions of the movement.

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[45] F. K. Wentz, "American Catholic Periodicals React to Nazism," Church History, XXXI (December, 1962), pp. 400-420.

While Catholics in America were affected by all these forces from outside the country, and seem to have acted in similar fashion to similar situations, we cannot overlook the power of propaganda, which influenced the American government as well as the electorate. Here, it should be noted that while for the most part Catholic Americans, at least initially acted first as Catholics, so too we find the same occurrence in regard to Italian-Americans. Whether they be Catholic or not, many Italian-Americans, in their formation of societies such as the Italian War Veterans and others, indicated that they were acting first with a look to their motherland, and secondly to their land of adoption. With the exception of a few men such as the editor of LaVoce del Popolo, Italian-Americans seem to have retained a great deal of nationalistic spirit. They were no doubt little affected, even the Catholics among them, by the anti-Fascist attitudes that may have been taken in the Catholic press, especially since it would seem that many would even ignore anti-Fascism if written in their native language. Nor were they a silent group, which would account for some events in the 1930's. For example, John Norman, in studying pro-Fascist propaganda in 1935 and 1936, draws the conclusion that it definitely influenced " . . . noticeably . . . the course of American neutrality."[46] He notes that there definitely was sympathy in America for Fascism, and this was fed as well by the Italian-American pro-Fascist propaganda to the point that it influenced significantly the foreign policy of the nation.

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[46] John Norman, "Influence of Pro-Fascist Propaganda on American Neutrality, 1935-1936," Essays in History and International Relations in Honor of George H. Blakeslee (Dwight E. Lee and George E. McReynolds, editors) (Worcester: Clark University Press, 1949), p. 213.

The point of all of this seems simply to be that American Catholicism, in reacting to Fascism, while it did so for reasons which were at times purely its own, came to conclusions and at times agreed in principle with the people of Italy itself, as well as with many fellow-Americans. There was confusion regarding the exact nature of Fascism, there were vested interests, and other causes which dictated the final opinion. However, there was a final opinion, at times strongly pro-Fascist, which gradually developed into anti-Fascism. This study ends in 1939. In the few remaining years before the war began, American Catholics would even more clearly solidify their position, a position which was beginning to take shape as necessarily anti-Fascist. Whereas at first they may have come to this conclusion through Catholic-based principles, they would later add to this the reasons of Americanism, patriotism, loyalty to country.

We cannot judge the period under study by present-day standards. Gradually, we are coming to a better understanding of Fascism, and today historians examine the phenomenon from afar, possibly making it possible to recognize it better as a politics of action first and theory only in a secondary way. However, for the time in question, judged as best we can judge it by the understanding that was then acknowledged of Fascism, it can be said that evidently, American Catholics, by their speeches and writings, as well as by their actions, betray a development, both intellectually and socially. Still, if it is possible to generalize, it should be stated that the opinions and reactions were given mainly by people who were first Catholics and then Americans in their reactions. This is basic.

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Detroit Free Press

New York Times

Catholic Herald Citizen (Milwaukee)	(19,200)
Catholic News (New York)	(55,753)
Catholic Messenger (Davenport)	(7,300)
Catholic Review (Baltimore)	(27,856)
La Voce del Popolo (Detroit)	(10,000)
Monitor (San Francisco)	(13,549)
New World (Chicago)	(68,750)
Pilot (Boston)	(50,000)
Social Justice (Detroit)	(Circulation not available)
Tablet (Brooklyn)	(46,819)

Magazines

Listed below is the circulation of the magazines consulted for this paper, for the year 1928. (Source: The Catholic Press Directory for 1928. Chicago: J. M. Meier, 1928.)

America	(34,784)
Ave Maria	(33,597)
Catholic Mind	(7,226)
Catholic World	(10,000)
Commonweal	(10,758)
Thought	(2,188)

Truth (58,354)

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